MEMOIRS OF COUNTESS GOLOVINE

1766-1821

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LA COMTESSE GOLOVINE

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MEMOIRS OF
COUNTESS GOLOVINE

A LADY AT THE COURT OF CATHERINE II

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH

BY

G. M. FOX-DAVIES

LONDON
DAVID NUTT, 57 TO 59 LONG ACRE
1910

PREFACE

'Is it really worth while publishing them? Everyone has read them already!' a friend said to me in jest, just as, with the gracious assistance of Count Charles Lançkoronski, the great-grandson of the authoress, I was getting these 'Recollections' ready for the press.

This was merely a jest, not seriously meant, but it nevertheless emphasises one feature which distinguishes Mme. Golovine's work from the many productions of the same class, for, in an age when clandestine literature itself borrows from the press its means of propagation, these 'Recollections' have reached a very wide public, even before the present edition, to which I nevertheless congratulate myself that I have devoted great care.

I am not alluding only to a Russian translation, published in 1900 by M. Choumigorski, the numerous gaps in which are to be explained by the severities of a censorship that now finds no defenders, nor yet to the numerous extracts, reproduced, many years ago, in various publications in Russia, France, and other countries, but even in MS. the 'Recollections,' since they were first written, passed freely from hand to hand, and a considerable number of copies were made of them. I personally have possessed as many as five, from various sources.

This wide publicity before any actual printed publication is sufficient attestation of the exceptional value of the book which has enjoyed it, but various reasons contribute to make this value greater.

In the first place, the 'Recollections' were written by

their authoress not only at the request, but, in part at least, with the collaboration of a great lady who, in a recent publication, has been made to emerge from the discreet obscurity in which she had hitherto dwelt. When she asked Mme. Golovine to devote her leisure to this task, the Empress Elizabeth, wife of Alexander I, offered not only to assist the production of the 'Recollections' by her advice, but also to revise and check them. Now, as the volumes which have already appeared of the interesting work of his Imperial Highness the Grand Duke Nicholas Mikhaïlovitch allow us to perceive, Elizabeth Alexieievna, though voluntarily effacing herself in the midst of the stirring events of her day, was neither ignorant of them, nor indifferent to them. I have in my hands some papers which I hope some day to publish—for they appear to me most instructive, from the point of view of French, even more than Russian history—which show this amiable princess engaged in a correspondence by no means lacking in political penetration.

Herself outside this sphere of action, Mme. Golovine is only its echo, and the vicissitudes of Court life separated her in the end from her most valuable source of information, so that the latter part of her 'Recollections' becomes almost entirely a personal biography, which is not, however, on that account without interest and charm.

The Court of Catherine II, the reigns of Paul I and of Alexander I, grouped round the throne a number of striking feminine figures, attractive and engaging for various reasons. In this brilliant constellation Barbara Nicolaievna stands unrivalled, through a combination of qualities, or even also of failings, that give her a captivating originality. Having lived in the intimacy of the Empress Catherine, she had an unbounded admiration and devotion for that great ruler, receiving from her in return proofs of very exceptional confidence and affection. And yet she shared none of her weaknesses; she was not affected in the least by her environment, and never at any time allowed herself to be so dazzled by the fascination and corruption of her surroundings,

as to permit the slightest infringement of her principles, or to abate one jot of the independence of her judgment.

For this reason her testimony as to the events she witnessed is of great value. She saw everything clearly and estimated it with an upright and naturally calm judgment. Personally above reproach, she was able, with regard to the errors of others, to maintain, not the easy indulgence that inclines to guilty compromise, but the broad comprehension which guards one from excessive severity.

After the accession of Alexander I, induced by various reasons to go abroad for a time, she took a very keen, but at the same time a very sympathetic, view of the France that was taking up her life again after the revolutionary turmoil. She was present at the end of the Consulate and the beginning of the Empire. Accidental relations brought her in familiar contact with the remnants of the old aristocracy that was then in process of reconstitution. In this circle, having espoused the ideas, the feelings, and the interests of her French friends, she did not show herself able to maintain the reserve that, as a foreigner, she ought to have done. More royalist than many of her friends, she even followed some of them into the arena of political controversy. She violently censured Buonaparte. But she was not alone among the Russians of her day to do so, and there again, as reflecting the passions of the time, her testimony is not devoid of interest.

In a word, she wrote passing in review the great and small events with which her life was interwoven, and, with no experience of the art of writing, and, too, with no pretensions to having such, she acquired, thanks to natural and hereditary talent, if not the mastery of literary expression, at any rate a grace of style that has given pleasure to many readers.

Daughter of Lieutenant-General Prince Nicholas Fiodorovitch Galitzine (1728–1780) and of Prascovia Ivanovna Chouvalov (1734–1802), she belongs by birth to two families whose claims to fame require no comment. From her mother's side she inherited literary and artistic tastes

and aptitudes, for Prascovia Ivanovna was the sister of the favourite of another Elizabeth—the daughter of Peter the Great—Ivan Ivanovitch Chouvalov (1727–1798), who, the founder of the University of Moscow and of the Academy of Fine Arts, was able to play Mæcenas even abroad during the voluntary exile of fifteen years which he imposed upon himself after the death of his Imperial friend. And men of letters, even in France, are acquainted with the other Chouvalov, Andrew Petrovitch (1727–1783), who, the correspondent of Voltaire, of d'Alembert and of La Harpe, rhymed verses of no small merit to the memory of Ninon.

The childhood and early youth of Barbara Nicolaievna were, however, spent away from the influence of her illustrious relations. Born in 1766, until 1780 she lived with her parents at Petrovskoie, a residence quite in the country, in the province of Moscow, where she only associated with country neighbours of very little refinement. Her father, of whom we hear little, seems himself to have been uninteresting. Her mother, though intelligent, and solicitously devoting herself to her daughter's education, had no facilities at Petrovskoie for giving her proper advantages, and her uncle, Ivan Ivanovitch, was travelling, having taken with him to Italy and France the elder of Barbara Nicolaievna's two brothers, Fiodor.

Suddenly, in 1780, a new destiny opened out before the future Countess Golovine. Her father died, her younger brother Ivan having preceded him to the grave (1777), and her uncle came back. Princess Galitzine decided to join, at St. Petersburg, this dearly loved brother, who, a bachelor and with no other near relatives, seemed inclined to concentrate all his affections upon these who were left him. Reduced now to three persons, the family occupied a house next to Chouvalov's, on the Nevski Prospect, at the angle of the great Sadovaïa ; a door between the houses made the two homes one, and Barbara Nicolaievna was soon the heart and soul delight and the happiness of them both.

She rapidly filled up the gaps in the rudimentary instruction that she had received at Petrovskoie. Ivan Ivanovitch

had brought back from Rome and from Paris precious art collections, antique marbles, pictures, engravings, and a valuable library, and the girl drew up the inventory of them with a delight and a fervour that made her devote herself thenceforward to artistic and literary pursuits. She read a great deal, but drew even more. Soon she learned to paint, and showed a feeling for nature, and a skill and critical perception of which we have proof in the many examples of her work that have come down to us, and a share of which she seems to have transmitted to all her descendants. In addition to the 'Recollections' she left behind her numbers of sketchbooks, and her daughters and grandsons have filled the blank pages of them with drawings, landscapes, and views of old Paris, now disappeared, portraits and caricatures, so that they form a most attractive collection.

Barbara Nicolaievna herself gives evidence in them of real artistic gifts. Some of her works have been reproduced, amongst others, a portrait of Potemkine, which is perhaps the most expressive picture in existence of the celebrated favourite of the great Catherine. M. Rovinski mentions also eulogistically, in his 'Lexicon of Engraved Russian Portraits' (ii. 856, and iv. 393), a drawing representing the Empress seated under the famous 'Colonnade' at Tsarskoie-Sielo. 'A very characteristic portrait,' he says, 'and very like.'

But music, too, attracted the girl. She sang, and later on even attempted composition. She was to figure successfully in the concerts at Tsarskoie-Sielo and the Winter Palace, and win applause by songs of her own composing, without, however, ever falling into pretentious and ostentatious dilettantism.

At the same time, under her uncle's directions, she was learning to use the literary language of the period, if not with absolute correctness, at any rate with agreeable facility. And, with the ease, the clearness, and the taste of the French masters, she assimilated also something of the spirit animating them. She was to be renowned in the future for the charm

of her conversation, the wit of her remarks, and the spontaneous vivacity of her repartee.

Thus natural gifts and acquired talents formed a combination, of which, in Russia as elsewhere, her contemporaries were unanimous in acknowledging the charm.

And in thus extolling her gifts they were not biased by her physical attractions, for, as a matter of fact, Barbara Nicolaievna does not appear to have been a beauty. A country poet, Ivan Morozov, who, in 1780, dedicated to her an ode, a few copies of which were printed (Moscow, 1780), certainly sang the praises of her eyes 'like the brilliant dawn' and her cheeks of 'lilies and roses,' but a portrait painted about the same time, and preserved at Petrovskoie, the property at the present time of Prince Alexander Galitzine, and attributed to the celebrated Rokotov, shows nothing of this. It reveals a countenance which, even in the bloom of her youth, is more remarkable for the intensity of its expression than for regularity or beauty of feature. And the portrait by Mme. Vigée-Lebrun, taken many years later, and reproduced in the work that M. Nolhac has devoted to this great painter, as well as another referred to by the Grand Duke Nicholas Mikhaïlovitch, give the same impression.

But Barbara Nicolaievna was all the same not ugly, although she disdained if not all coquetry, which would have been unnatural, at any rate all preoccupation with regard to her appearance. Her husband, who married her for love, was not the only man who found her pleasing, although she allowed no other to tell her so; but the reasons for the undeniable attractions that she exerted were of another order.

In 1783, appointed a maid of honour, she made her début at Court, where her brother had figured, since 1780, as a gentleman-in-waiting. She quickly attracted attention, but had already won the affection of the man who was to give her his name.

The Golovines had since the sixteenth century belonged to the high aristocracy of Moscovite Boïars, the creatures

of Ivan the Terrible and his immediate predecessors, whom the policy of these sovereigns forced into the front rank, by opposing them to the scornful circle of the appanaged and mediatised princes descended from Rurik and Guedymine. Peter Ivanovitch, treasurer of Vassili IV, and Simon Vassilievitch, the hero of the wars in Poland, played an important part in the history of their country. Later, Ivan Ivanovitch Golovine, the companion of Peter the Great on his travels in the west and his assistant in the repression of the revolt of the *strieltsy*, had the honour of opening the lists of Russian admirals. One of his relatives, Fiodor Alexieievitch, Grand Admiral of the Fleet at Azov, Generalissimo and Field Marshal, was, by virtue of a diploma of the Emperor Leopold I, dated 2 January 1702, the first to bear the title of Count in Russia. Born in 1756, his grandson, Nicholas Nicolaievitch, was, at the time Barbara Nicolaievna saw him for the first time, in 1782, one of the most brilliant matches that could have been offered her. Handsome and well made, as is evident from a miniature by Isabey in the possession of Count Lançkoronski, and of commanding presence, he passed also for one of the richest men in the country.

The two families were related, and the young people were attracted by each other, but Princess Galitzine opposed the immediate consummation of the match as premature. According to the modern ideas which were beginning to penetrate among the aristocracy of the country, it would be well, she thought, for the mutual inclination of the pair to be put to the test of time, and for Nicholas Nicolaievitch to sow his wild oats.

He did so conscientiously in the course of a tour in the west, the plan and route of which were probably suggested by Chouvalov. However, he did not follow in the footsteps of Ivan Ivanovitch, and it never occurred to him to cultivate tastes and habits that would have brought him into intellectual fellowship with his prospective bride. He made a long stay in Paris, but the intimacies he formed there were neither literary nor artistic. He was supposed to have

had one with the famous 'Amazon of Liberty,' Théroigne de Mericourt, who may well have been the mother of a son of whom Countess Golovine took charge later with the indulgent solicitude that the habits of the period almost necessitated. The very chaste and very jealous spouse of Paul I, Marie Feodorovna, set the example with regard to her husband's bastards. Favoured, in addition, by a patent of nobility, the bastard of Nicholas Nicolaievitch bore the name of his father shortened, as was also according to usage, and was called Lovine. At Montpellier, Count Golovine seems likewise to have contracted an intimacy with a girl of good family, and a daughter, an exquisite creature, was the result. Educated by the generosity of Countess Golovine, she was married to a M. de Rivière, the Minister of the Court of Hesse at St. Petersburg. A distinguished painter and a friend of Mme. Vigée-Lebrun, he sometimes undertook, out of pure goodwill, to paint the landscape backgrounds to the portraits of this great artist. Count Lançkoronski possesses two canvases, on one of which M. de Rivière has perpetuated himself, and on the other his charming wife with their daughter, still a child, both works revealing a sound and genuine talent for portraiture. The whole Rivière family, until it died out, continued to be on terms of relationship with Count and Countess Golovine.

On the traveller's return, the marriage was none the less promptly determined upon, and proved a happy one. 'I took supper last night . . . with Countess Golovine,' wrote, in January 1792, Count Valentine Esterhazy, who had recently been sent to France on behalf of the French princes. 'She is madly in love with her husband, and he, too, is very fond of her. It is a pleasure to see them.' ('Lettres,' published by E. Daudet, Paris, 1907, p. 380.)

The object of contradictory, but mostly ill-natured comments on the part of his contemporaries, while a finished type of the Russian great lord of his time, indolent, sybaritic, and very unbusinesslike, Nicholas Nicolaievitch seems to have been a very good fellow and an honest man.

A colonel at thirty-four years of age, with neither aptitude nor taste for the profession of arms, and later a public official with equally little vocation for that occupation, he shone neither in the military nor the civil service, but seems to have distinguished himself in both by scrupulous integrity. Both the carelessness with which he ran through his enormous fortune, and his intimacy with Count Theodore (Fiodor) Rastoptchine, 'that mad Fedka,' as Catherine called him, have earned him severe criticism. Nevertheless, in 1814, at the news of a serious illness which was said to have attacked him, Mme. Swetchine exclaimed: 'If we lose him there will be one honest man the less in Russia, who has none too many.' (De Falloux, 'Lettres de Mme. Swetchine,' i. 112.)

The absence in the 'Recollections' of all complaint with regard to the mental or moral weaknesses from which Mme. Golovine must doubtless have suffered, is hardly sufficient to disprove their existence. It can easily be accounted for by the reserve which, as will be seen, she maintained with regard to other facts which nevertheless played an important part in her private life. Mme. Golovine did not tell everything—very far from it—of what most nearly concerned her. But it appears probable that she was likewise truthful in crediting this calumniated husband with traits of nobility and generosity which are enough to rehabilitate his memory. And, on his side, Nicholas Nicolaievitch did not prevent his wife making their home a place of discreet, but singularly attractive, hospitality, in which, in St. Petersburg as in Paris, two select societies, almost merged together by the stream of emigration which was at that period established between the two countries, met and mutually enjoyed each other's fascinations.

After having passed in review the salons on the Neva banks, Prince Adam Czartoryski had to write: 'The Golovine house is different from all those I have mentioned. Here, there are not daily entertainments, but, instead, a little coterie, after the fashion of those that used in Paris to perpetuate the ancient traditions of Versailles. The

mistress of the house, witty, sensitive, and excitable, is possessed of great talents and of a love for the fine arts.' (' Mémoires,' 1. 43.)

' Excitable ? ' Nothing in the first pages of the ' Recollections ' indicates the trait thus emphasised by the illustrious Pole ; nothing seems to have been farther from the natural temperament of Barbara Nicolaievna, who was morally and mentally perfectly normal and healthy. For reasons that will appear on reading this volume, Prince Czartoryski's evidence might also, as far as she is concerned, be repudiated, as hardly that of an unbiased observer. And yet he was right. Mme. Golovine had already passed through several stages. On terms of familiar association with the French guests at St. Petersburg, she gradually came under their influence. A sensibility after the manner of Rousseau at that time submerged the whole of Western Europe, and, emerging from this tranquil wave of feeling into an impetuous torrent, exaltation was, as is well known, the element in which the whole life of the French émigrés was bathed in all the countries to which they carried their regrets, their sufferings, and their hopes, alike embittered.

Separated one day, by circumstances that the ' Recollections ' suggest, from her natural guides, uprooted, and out of her element, Mme. Golovine allowed herself to float with the stream. She did not altogether lose her footing, but she went a little adrift.

From that time forth she took exaggerated views of everything, of politics, of religion, and even of friendship.

Her husband's family brought her the first, in point of time, of these friends, the Countess Anne Ivanovna Tolstoy, daughter of Prince Ivan Serguieievitch Bariatinski, and of Princess Catherine Petrovna of Holstein Beck. The mother of the latter, Nathalie Nicolaievna, née Golovine, was the aunt of Count Nicholas Nicolaievitch. Of alert intelligence and romantic temperament, Mme. Tolstoy passed for a beauty. Her intimates called her ' La Longue ' on account of her height. Nicknames were then the fashion, and by reason of her sauciness and mischievousness, which, however,

did not degenerate into malice,—I must honestly confess it, at the risk of discrediting the ' Recollections ' with a certain class of readers,—Mme. Golovine, in her youth, earned for herself the name of ' little dragon.' She was a dragon of virtue. Unconvincing though such testimony usually is, in this case the traditions preserved in her family deserve credence, for, throughout the entire world of her contemporaries, not one spiteful tongue was found to contradict it—even among the best friends of Barbara Nicolaievna! She was a dragon of virtue, with the instincts of a Newfoundland dog, invariably tempted to fling herself into the waves of ' dangerous intimacies,' in order to fish out the victims, who were generally disinclined to accept her assistance. Mme. Tolstoy had experience of this, and was not in the least grateful, and the relations between the two young matrons were permanently affected. Himself of very irregular habits and of an intriguing temper, Count Tolstoy contributed to his wife's divagations. But soon Barbara Nicolaievna was to come under the influence of another feminine attraction, of much more compelling character.

In 1793 Catherine II interested herself in the marriage of her favourite grandson, whom she would have liked, as is well known, to make her next heir. Paul accepted sulkily, as his habit was, the daughter-in-law of his mother's choice, and, converted as was right and proper to the orthodox religion, Princess Louise of Baden entered the Imperial family under the name of Elizabeth Alexieievna. A household was constituted for the young couple, and Count Golovine filled in it the post of Marshal, the appointment being partly, and even largely, made on his wife's account. A great expert in such matters, for reasons that are well enough known, Catherine had noticed the ' little dragon,' and was not sorry to place her as, in a sense, a guarantee of respectability near the young Grand Duchess.

Married at fifteen to a husband who was only sixteen, the future Empress Elizabeth could certainly not expect support of the kind from the Mistress of her Court, Catherine Petrovna Chouvalov, née Saltykov, one of the most

mischievous type of married women she could have had about her.

The Grand Duchess lent herself docilely to the strategic combination of which she was the object, and an affection resulted of which the ' Recollections,' always discreet, give but a very feeble idea. Mme. Golovine showed an alert maternal solicitude for her, combined with an adoration that never failed or flagged, but which future tests and trials, while irritating, only exalted to loftier heights. The amiable but precociously romantic young princess abandoned herself to a veritable girlish passion, in which the sentimentalism of the period, homesickness, and disappointments in her married life, which she bore with impatience, vented themselves in outbursts of which to-day we have difficulty in comprehending the vehemence.

The Grand Duke Alexander, although married to a young wife who seemed in every respect adapted to rouse, if need be, and to hold his affection, seems to have responded coldly to the first appeals of a tenderness that was easily abashed and thrown back upon itself, and consequently inclined to transfer itself to another object. Between women, and also between men, the fashion of the times tended to exaggeration of feeling, and the friendship shown by the Grand Duke Alexander to Prince Adam Czartoryski was of an analogous character.

Though favoured by Catherine II, the friendship of the ' little dragon ' with the young princess was destined to a cruel return. Until the death of the Empress, it made Mme. Golovine supremely happy, and she owed to it, both at the grand and at the smaller Court, an exceptional position. Everyone was ready to pay homage to the young woman whom the sovereign, and the wife of the future sovereign, ostensibly regarded with particular affection. Caressed, spoiled, fêted, Barbara Nicolaievna lived in a splendid dream.

Everything changed at the accession of Paul I.

Mme. Golovine herself attributed this sudden change to the hostility of the new Empress, Marie Feodorovna,

with whom she had not been in favour for a long time. However, it should be noted, as the Grand Duke Nicholas Mikhaïlovitch points out (' L'Impératrice Elisabeth I,' p. 252 of the French edition), that other persons who were likewise unpopular with Paul's wife, such as the Czartoryskis and Princess Nathalie Feodorovna Chakhovskoi, afterwards Princess Alexander Mikhaïlovitch Galitzine, were not driven from the Court and the intimacy of the Grand Duke and Grand Duchess.

The reason of the radical change which came about at this time in the position of the Golovines is of a more complex nature. The unusual favour, which they had both enjoyed up to this time, had not failed to rouse bitter jealousy in both Courts, and, furthermore, Mme. Golovine, with her invariable uprightness, had thwarted various intrigues, when Mme. Chouvalov and her acolyte, Alexander Iakovlevitch Protassov, the tutor of Alexander I, stooped to minister to the shameless designs of Prince Plato Zoubov. As a distraction from his present unpleasant occupation, and as if to ensure his position in the future, the last favourite of Catherine dared, under the very eyes of his mistress, to address very indiscreet homage to Elizabeth Alexieievna. The old Empress pretended to take no notice, and, disappointed of the affection she had looked for from her husband, the young Grand Duchess was embarrassed by it, and Mme. Golovine attempted an energetic intervention.

At this game, even with the most upright intentions, one runs the risk of oneself appearing to be an intriguer, and many persons did not hesitate to denounce Barbara Nicolaievna as such (' Archives Vorontsov,' xxx. 113 ; compare Schilder's ' Alexander the First,' i. 88). Count Tolstoy, who was likewise a member of the Grand Ducal household, chafed at the presence of Count and Countess Golovine, whose position eclipsed his own. By manœuvres that the ' Recollections ' initiate us into, he succeeded in throwing upon Mme. Golovine the double onus of the errors into which his wife had allowed herself to be drawn and of the

injurious suspicions of which the Grand Duchess simultaneously became the object. Elizabeth Alexieievna allowed herself to be convinced of the culpability of her friend, and a rupture followed. The Golovines left the Court.

The truth was to come out later. But even then, for various and rather enigmatic reasons, the victim of this lamentable error never regained what she had lost.

She lost everything at once. Appointed Curator of the University of Moscow, her brother left to take up his post. Soon, in 1798, I. I. Chouvalov expired, leaving in the joint household a void that could not be filled, and a lawsuit that was entered into over his property introduced discord into a family till then closely united.

Married to a man whose faithful and devoted companion she remained to the end—but who, intellectually, was immeasurably her inferior—and the mother of two little baby girls, Barbara Nicolaievna suddenly found herself alone, morally and materially, and even isolated. Undeserved though her disgrace was, it kept from her many of those who had formerly disputed the entrée to her house. Engaged in the maddest of love escapades with a man—the English ambassador, Lord Charles Whitworth—who might have been her father, and whom another amorous intrigue occupied elsewhere, even Mme. Tolstoy became estranged from the friend who had done all she could to set her on her guard against her mad adventure.

Barbara Nicolaievna still, it is true, had her mother with her. She never ceased to lavish upon her the most affectionate care, and, she, in sympathy with the intellectual currents of the age, was in every respect a precious companion. But, already very old, and in feeble health, and Russian to her finger nails, Chouvalov though she was, Princess Galitzine remained somewhat outside a movement that she had only at any time countenanced with reserve, and to which she was less and less inclined to give herself up altogether. Growing now precipitate and passionate, it attacked things that she deemed sacred and unassailable, creating among those who abandoned themselves unreservedly

to it, as was the case with Mme. Golovine, and others more timid or more wise, unfortunate disagreements.

A new world was making its appearance at St. Petersburg, grouping together elements well adapted, in various respects, to appeal to imaginations and sensibilities disproportionately sharpened in an environment incapable of satisfying them. These were the flotsam and jetsam of the revolutionary turmoil by which France was just then being convulsed. The policy of Paul I inclining him to welcome these émigrés, restoring Versailles at Mittau, and erecting a ' Hôtel de Condé ' on the banks of the Neva, they became the heroes of the day. At Court and in society a bevy of strangers, whose names had formerly been associated with the circle of the King of France—Broglie, Crussol, Damas, d'Autichamp, Torcy, La Garde, La Maisonfort, Saint Priest, La Ferté, Blacas, and others—thronged and pushed into the front rank. At the same time, the tempest flung up on the same hospitable shores some of the eminent French clergy. Allowed to found at St. Petersburg an educational establishment, which was a duplicate of the Jesuit College of which the famous Father Gruber was the head, the Abbé Nicolle, already renowned as a pedagogue in his own country, collected pupils from some of the noblest Russian families : Galitzine, Narychkine, Gagarine, Menchikov, Orlov. By the side of it, the Chevalier d'Augard, in the same aristocratic environment, made himself the instrument of an active propaganda in which pedagogical preoccupations were industriously allied with a very ardent Catholic proselytism.

On account of their rank, and also by reason of the friendships contracted by I. I. Chouvalov during his stay in France, the Golovines had been among the first to come in contact with the exiled French nobles. The appointment of Count Nicholas Nicolaievitch to the Court of the Grand Duke Alexander was even commonly attributed to the influence of Count Esterhazy, agent of the French princes. The isolation to which she now found herself condemned, inclined her still more to welcome the newcomers, and Barbara Nicolaievna, on her part, was well fitted to attract

them. In her salon, more than in any other, they thought they found the atmosphere of their own country. After being an assiduous guest of the Golovines, during her long stay at St. Petersburg, Mme. Vigée-Lebrun writes thus of her who had been her hostess :

' She is a charming woman, intelligent and gifted, and was often herself our only entertainment, for she received very few visitors. She drew very well and composed delightful songs, which she sang to her own accompaniment on the piano. Moreover, she was on the watch for all the literary novelties in Europe, which, I believe, were known at her house as soon as they were in Paris.' (' Souvenirs,' ii. 323–324.)

The impressions of Mme. Edling, the author of the well-known ' Mémoires,' were similar :

' I made friends with Countess Golovine, whose grace, eloquence, and talents made her house an agreeable resort.' (' Mémoires,' p. 45.)

And soon a gradually more pronounced assimilation between the amiable hostess's ideas and the moral temperament of her habitual companions, brought them into closer bonds of friendship. Barbara Nicolaievna became more and more irresistibly carried away, in the company of these wandering knights of the political and religious legitimacy, and went so far as to espouse their twofold faith.

Shortly after the accession of Paul I she met, moreover, among them, a person who by virtue of her rank, her past, and her character was destined to assume an imperious and permanent ascendancy over her.

This was the celebrated Princesse de Tarente, Louise de Châtillon, the youngest daughter of the last Duc of the name, and of Adrienne de La Blanc de La Vallière. Born in 1763, married in 1781 to Charles de La Tremoïlle, Prince de Tarente, she had figured, from 1787 onwards, among Marie Antoinette's ladies of the palace, and shared the last pleasures as also the first trials of the unfortunate Queen. Imprisoned in 1792 in the Abbaye, she escaped with her life and was even restored to liberty. In England, where

she had taken refuge, pressing letters from the Emperor Paul and the Empress Marie Feodorovna had followed her, inviting her to come over to Russia, where she was to be provided, with all her family, with a suitable establishment. As she had nothing left of a fortune which, at her marriage, had allowed her to spend £66,954 in 'dress and wedding-cards' (Princesse de Tarente, 'Souvenirs,' p. 242), and had no other means of assisting her family, who were suffering quite as much as herself, the Princess accepted.

A reputation which made a heroine of her preceded her to Russia. It was said that she had protected a girl entrusted to her care at the peril of her own life, by interposing her own body between her and the muskets pointed at her. And, indeed, the mother of this girl, the Duchesse de Tourzel, records the fact in her 'Mémoires,' published, in 1883, by the Duc des Cars (ii. 279). The appearance and manner of Mme. de Tarente were in keeping with this flattering legend. Austere, cold, and invariably sad, with never a smile on her lips, she seemed to summarise in herself all the sorrows of the dynasty that she had served, her country, and her race.

'This singular woman,' said Mme. Edling, 'had something repellent about her appearance and manners, and yet her heart was capable of the deepest affections. I have never known a greater character and a narrower mind' ('Mémoires,' p. 46). According to the opinion of M. de Falloux ('Madame Swetchine,' i. 164), 'The Princess's political ideas were neither weighty nor profound, but they impressed, because they were associated with such great traditions and such affecting misfortunes. She was herself a living incarnation of the past.'

Mme. Golovine was struck by her, to the deepest recesses of her being, at their very first meeting, and soon a sympathy in moral and material ideas manifested itself between her and the noble foreigner that death alone was to destroy. From that time forth, and until the day when the Princess of Taranto breathed her last under her friend's roof in 1814, their lives were blended. Mme. Golovine divided her

affections, her thoughts and her devotion into two parts, of which the larger did not fall to the lot of her nearest relations. Neither her husband nor her daughters complained, for that matter, but shared her affection for the Princess, an affection which seemed to extend to the very servants of the household.

The Princess of Taranto was not the only one of her compatriots to benefit from the friendship. Sensitive and for the most with exaggerated views, dandies into the bargain, despite their temporary distress, and refined, in spite of an education often fragmentary, all these émigrés, as also their companions in exile at St. Petersburg, Jesuits in search of an establishment and pedagogues applying themselves to a Catholic propaganda, easily found in Russia the way to certain minds and certain hearts, that had also been disappointed. They offered them what the awakening of ideas and of new sentiments caused them to seek in vain in their own country, where a transparent polish only half hid the native barbarity in the background, where literature, arts, and sciences were still in their rudimentary stages, and where, represented by ignorant and untidy popes, the externals of religion itself were repellent to refined minds.

Mme. Golovine and many of her compatriots, the most worthy, one might say, and the most open to noble aspirations, were unable to distinguish, beneath this outer appearance, the substance of persons and things. An education received from foreigners, and often completed in the west, a sojourn at a Court that had been abruptly initiated into all the refinements of Europe, the atmosphere, in a word, of this exotic society incontinently thrust into their homes, rendered them blind to the best and generous parts of the Russian national character. In this world of political derelicts, attractive in many respects, but at heart frivolous, they fell into the cruel error of perceiving the ideal of culture to which, since the time of Peter the Great, the best of them had aspired, and toward which, as they thought, the bulk of their people would incline, when once their feet had been set in the paths of civilisation.

Barbara Nicolaievna associated herself with this thoughtless impulse, and, her face once set in this direction with the natural straightforwardness of her temperament, she was unable to stop halfway. She wanted to take everything from her new friend, and share everything with her. With a certain number of her compatriots of both sexes, of which Mme. de Tolstoy herself was one, and at a date which we do not precisely know, for she gives us not the slightest indication of it in her ' Recollections,' she became a Catholic. The ' Recollections ' are silent with regard to this conversion, not containing a single allusion to it, for the frequent visits of the Countess to Catholic churches cannot be regarded as such. Even nowadays, Russians of my acquaintance, frequent guests in Paris, and fervent members of the orthodox church, never fail to attend a Mass at the Madeleine, before going to the *tserkov* in the Rue Daru.

The silence of Barbara Nicolaievna on this subject can perhaps be explained by the august collaboration to which I have alluded, but the event must have weighed heavily on a life destined henceforward to heavy trials.

Mme. Golovine's brother, being unable to forgive her conversion, broke off all relations with her. Prince Fiodor Galitzine himself left ' Mémoires ' (' Archive Russe,' 1874), but he does not speak of his sister at all, and she herself, in her ' Recollections,' only mentions him three times, and the third time with a perceptible touch of hostility. Although, as I have said, not habitually malicious, neither as an orthodox Russian nor as a Catholic did Barbara Nicolaievna practise any too scrupulously a Christian forgiveness of offences.

On occasion she even made use of a wit which was quite passably mordant; and she could give a nasty backhanded blow, as Count Esterhazy suggests in a pretty portrait in which, by comparison, he expresses his preference for another model. ' With much less firmness and steadiness than thou,' he writes to his wife, ' for she takes extravagant fancies and tires of them quickly, with less kindness . . . and

less wit, she is the woman here who is most like thee: polite, loving her husband, her duties and her child, having a pleasing figure without being a beauty, abounding in talents and charms in company.' ('Lettres,' p. 380).

Let us note, by the way, that, married late in life to a woman twenty-five years younger than himself, Count Esterhazy had very special reasons for thus giving her the advantage over the other.

Mme. Golovine had other reasons for feeling very painfully the consequences of her change of religion. After having himself lavished on her proofs of exceptional confidence and affection, the Grand Duke Alexander seems to have witnessed the disgrace of Barbara Nicolaievna without concern. Perhaps he did not seriously believe in her culpability, but, before the future enthusiasms which we know of, he still distrusted exaggeration of feeling. The natural effect of the conversion of his wife's old friend was to strengthen this distrust, by bringing reasons of state to bear upon it. The future sovereign of orthodox Russia could not encourage abjurations. And when, undeceived, Elizabeth Alexieievna seemed inclined to renew her intimacy with the one she had formerly so passionately loved, a barrier separated them which the young princess had neither the wish nor the power to cross.

I put forward this explanation in default of any other that is suggested by the 'Recollections,' or is acceptable from extraneous evidence. It is not, however, a perfectly satisfactory one, for Mme. Tolstoy, another convert, who succeeded Mme. Golovine, if not in the affections, at any rate in the intimacy of Elizabeth Alexieievna, remained to the end on extremely familiar terms with her. The intimacy, it is true, was kept up mainly by correspondence, for the former worshipper of Lord Charles Whitworth lived abroad a great part of her life, and died abroad.

Barbara Nicolaievna remained in quarantine, and her affectionate fidelity wounded, and herself surrounded by a ring of more or less overt hostilities, she felt a more and more imperative desire to leave a place to which nothing

henceforward linked her. Raised to the throne by the death of Paul I (March 1801), Elizabeth Alexieievna remained for her the object of an unalterable and always enthusiastic affection. Throughout all the deceptions, the rebuffs, and even the humiliations that she had to endure from her, not only was Mme. Golovine never lacking in the slightest in the external respect that the sovereign required of her, but she did not address, even in her own mind, the slightest reproach to the woman who was so beloved and so ungrateful. Dismissed, held at a distance, insulted in hundreds of ways, she retained unimpaired, both for the sovereign and the woman, the affection that she had vowed to her in the unforgettable hours of their early friendship. But, obeying either higher will, or a personal caprice, the idol now showed herself to be of marble.

'A brilliant and passionate imagination,' said Mme. Edling in speaking of the Empress ('Mémoires,' p. 57), 'were in her combined with a cold heart incapable of real affection. . . . The loftiness of her ideas, the nobility of her sentiments, her virtuous inclinations, and her lovely face made her the idol of the crowd, but could not bring her back her husband. But homage which flattered her pride could not suffice to her happiness. . . . Always surrounded by illusions, she devoted herself, in turn, to the arts, to study, and to the most passionate sentiments . . . and always undeceived, and disappointed, she only caught a brief glimpse of her happiness, as life was about to leave her. . . .'

We know, or we shall know, as we follow the Grand Duke Michael Mikhaïlovitch in his revelations, that it was only during the last moments of Alexander's life that the august husband and wife, officially united, but until then most widely separated, effected a reconciliation that death rendered ephemeral. It was on the fatal route of Taganrog, that the couple, one at last, made their real wedding journey.

Shortly after the accession of Alexander, Mme. de Tarente found herself recalled to France by family interests. She

had not met in Russia with what she had had a right to expect. The favour of the Emperor Paul, always capricious, had brought her cruel disappointments. A few months later, accompanied by all her family, Mme. Golovine followed her friend.

Welcomed like a relative by the high society of the Faubourg, and finding every satisfaction for heart and mind in this environment, the charms and the virtues of which she kindly exaggerates, she would no doubt have prolonged her stay in France indefinitely, had not open hostilities between Imperial France and Russia been an obstacle to her desires. She tore herself with regret from her adopted country, but, as a compensation, she took with her that which she cared for most.

On the eve of her departure Mme. de Châtillon had said to her : ' Take my daughter with you ! '

According to a tradition which I heard at the Château de Wideville, at the present time the property of the Comte and Comtesse de Balard, who, through the d'Uzes, inherited it from the La Vallière family, the Princess of Taranto had had no reason to be specially well pleased with her visit to her friends. Discussions with regard to money, painful relations with her husband, by whom she had only had a daughter who died young, had made her regret the trials, severe though they had been, of her exile. She was said to be difficult to get on with. The two friends did not leave each other again. Reduced once again to the enjoyment of very small means, the former lady of the palace accepted the hospitality of the Golovines, and, in one of the albums which I have mentioned above, a touching water colour represents the room in the *datcha* at St. Petersburg in which, in 1814, she expired, after terrible sufferings bravely borne.

This was to Barbara Nicolaievna a blow from which she never recovered. More than ever she felt out of her element in Russia. Under cover of an affectionate indulgence, in furtive interviews, which were like love rendezvous, the Empress Elizabeth entertained her, now and again, with

her longings for the old intimacy. But these were only fugitive gleams of a past that had vanished for ever.

After bringing her mother to Paris, Mme. Golovine had the great grief of losing her on the return journey. She did violence to her wounded feelings, and made advances to her brother, afterwards taking care of his sons, whose education he was neglecting. She then turned her attention to the marrying of her daughters. But, inconsolable, she was interested in nothing but her past life.

Soon domestic troubles contributed to darken her disenchanted existence. Although rather coldly treated by the Emperor Alexander, in whose circle Count Tolstoy, still jealous and inimical, occupied a confidential post, Count Golovine re-entered the Imperial service, and obtained for his daughter an appointment as maid of honour, and for his wife the rank of Lady of the Order of Saint Catherine. But he was fast rushing to his ruin. Mme. Vigée-Lebrun was astonished to encounter at his table a foul-mouthed peasant, and to learn that he was a moneylender who had been asked to assist in meeting the demands of pressing creditors (' Souvenirs,' ii. 322). Though more unwittingly and more thoughtlessly, Count Golovine was only rushing down the same slope as most of his equals at this period. I. F. Timkovski, the author of some very curious memoirs, (' Archive Russe,' 1874, i. 1463), tells how some of these great lords were sitting round a table, and discussing the difficulties that life presented, and were, for the most part, agreed as to the impossibility of living upon one's income. One of the guests having urged Count Stroganov as an argument to the contrary, another replied : ' Well ! and isn't it easy for him, with a million roubles a year ? But I, who have only a hundred thousand, how am I to manage ? '

Count Golovine, who is perhaps the one here quoted by Timkovski, though he does not mention him by name, managed, by getting himself heroically into debt and by gradually parting with the whole of his patrimony.

One day Barbara Nicolaievna had to resign herself to the sale of the *datcha* in which Mme. de Tarente had died, and

which had become her favourite residence. She saw engulfed in a bottomless abyss the ample dowry promised to her daughters. Catholics like their mother, they had been obliged to marry Poles; the elder, Prascovia, Count Maximilian Fredro, and the younger, Elizabeth, Count Leo Potoçki, a brilliant diplomatist in the service of Russia.

In 1817 she discontinued the writing of her 'Recollections.' She had only undertaken the task in obedience to a wish expressed by her idol, and now the idol, forgetful, seemed to have lost interest in them. Barbara Nicolaievna ended by herself losing all interest in life, and about the same time the symptoms of an incurable complaint, the same as that to which her 'incomparable friend' had succumbed—cancer—began to affect her health.

In 1818, failing in health more and more, she went again into France, and after a last appearance in Russia, started a third time, never to return. Montpellier at that time attracted a number of foreigners by the renown of its medical faculty. Mme. Golovine seems to have made only a very short stay in the town, but from this moment onwards, while waiting the great darkness that will enfold us all, such obscurity covers the last years of her wandering life, that the learned editor of the Russian edition of the 'Recollections' at first sought the tomb of their author on the banks of the Lez. Afterwards he fancied that he had found it at Saint Germain des Prés, and he even reproduced a vignette, with an inscription, in which he was unable, and with good reason, to make out the date of her decease. Included in an album belonging to Count Leo Mniszech, the great-grandson of Mme. Golovine, this sketch was merely an improvisation of the imagination of a brilliant diplomatist, who cared more for art than for authenticity.

It has been permitted me to raise a corner of the veil,—thanks to the gracious intervention of the august historian of the Empress Elizabeth. Hearing of my perplexity, the Grand Duke Nicholas Mikhaïlovitch put an end to my doubts by entrusting to me a part of his wonderful papers: autograph letters, in the first place, from Mme. Golovine,

dated 1820 and 1821, some from Montpellier, the others probably from Paris, and addressed to the idol. How different, alas! from the notes of former days, in which all etiquette was banished, and all distance wiped out, and the heart of her who wrote them could pour itself out unreservedly. Tenderness reveals itself still, but seems to be escaping from the effort made to restrain it, and is already chilled, it would seem, by approaching death. The first letter is doubtless a message of farewell, on leaving St. Petersburg.

19 *July* 1820.

'I have the honour of sending Your Imperial Majesty the prayer that you allowed me to offer you: it will be a consolation for me to think that you will read it sometimes. A union in God is the only true one, and the only one which real and disinterested affection can confidently hope for. . . .'

September 1821.

'Every day I am more and more convinced that words are a very feeble means of expressing strong feelings of love and gratitude. I appeal to Your Majesty's heart to read in mine all that contains for you. . . . My sufferings are constant . . . of this my extreme thinness and my weakness are a proof. I have very painful attacks and am condemned to suffer a very long time yet; but God, in His mercy, grants me grace to bear them without complaint, and I accept this trial, combined with so much actual privation, as a benefit. I have deserved so little up till now; I have enjoyed more than I have suffered; I am surrounded by friends and care; but what I have left behind me, nothing can replace. . . .

'P.S.—I often see Mme. de Tolstoy, but she is none the less a mystery to me.'

The relations between Mme. Golovine and her first friends were no longer of the most affectionate nature. Ill herself, and attacked, strangely enough, by the same complaint, to which in her turn she was to succumb, 'La Longue' was

seeking relief between the south of France and Paris. She carried on a more assiduous correspondence with the Empress Elizabeth, troubling herself, as far as she was concerned, to observe no ceremony and no constraint, and she wrote to her from Marseilles, on the 16th October 1818 :

' Among the other tribulations of life I have two in particular : the first, all the denunciatory letters of Mme. de Golovine. I speak of them to you, Madame, because perhaps you know what they are like, and nothing but a word from you will stop the intemperance of her language. . . .'

The following December, Barbara Nicolaievna was in Paris, but when the Empress wished to hear how she was, Mme. de Tolstoy could not tell her. Three years later, in April 1821, both ladies were again on the banks of the Seine, but had some difficulty in meeting. Mme. Tolstoy complains : ' I expected to be invited and I was not.' The expectation still not being realised, she dispensed with the invitation she had hoped for and had no reason to congratulate herself on doing so :

' I was more pleased to see her than she was to see me, I think. I bear no malice ; I regard her as a spoilt child. Her inconsistency is a misfortune for herself. Since yesterday, she has been in her element, in the Faubourg Saint Germain clique. She is mad about them. God grant that she may be happy with them.'

The persistent rancour of a disappointed heart, venting its anger, as is so often the case, upon the one who had tried to spare her the disappointment, is clearly to be read between the lines. Mme. Tolstoy would not even admit that her ex-friend was as seriously ill as she would have people believe : ' I think she is passing through a critical time, but there is nothing else the matter with her.'

In the month of June following she had to recognise her mistake. At the time Count Golovine was dying too, in Russia, in the midst of the wreck of his fortune and a concert of recriminations raised by the crowd of ' thoughtful friends who had lent him money at 12 per cent.,' as Count Rastoptchine put it (Letter and notes published by the Marquis de

Ségur, *Le Correspondant*, 1882, new series, vol. xc. p. 533). He added (date July 18, 1820) : ' Countess Golovine lingers, and the approaching heat will probably hasten her end. She suffers greatly, and yet, strange to say, she eats well, and does not realise her danger. The ministers of the Church give her consolation, and it appears that it is the Abbé Dieu-Desjardins who ministers to her. Rivières, her doctor, is always afraid of offending either against God, or the usages of society.'

' They are,' explained Mme. Tolstoy, ' internal tumours, which swell considerably and impede all the bodily functions. She suffers a great deal and with great courage and resignation.'

The two daughters of the dying woman, who were both pregnant, were in Russia and unable to travel. Her nephew, Fiodor Galitzine, spent a few weeks with her, but was obliged to leave again, recalled by the duties of his post. Mme. Tolstoy, who wished to dispute the care of the invalid with her friends of the noble Faubourg, found herself faced by a growing repugnance :

' She has not a person with her, of whom one could say : We can feel easy about her. I am very distressed about it. . . . I am also very grieved when she will not see me. . . . After so many years of a friendship tested by so many circumstances, she ought not to be shy of me, so I think, and I cannot understand it. . . .'

The two women were each growing an enigma to the other : it is the common history of all friendships, at their usual and melancholy decline.

Moreover, Mme. Tolstoy exaggerated the loneliness of Barbara Nicolaievna. Forcing her door one day, she found her in the company of Mme. de Béarn, who hardly ever left her. Moreover, Mme. Rivière, Count Golovine's natural daughter, was with her benefactress.

On July 10, 1821, Mme. Golovine received news of the death of her husband, on the 12th of the preceding month. ' I hope,' wrote Mme. Tolstoy rather maliciously, ' that it will not affect her health.' She found fault with the doctor

in whom the dying woman now reposed confidence, and who was nevertheless the famous Dubois. She would have preferred Dupuytren, 'who is very clever and careful, whereas Dubois only comes in at the last extremity.'

It does not look as though practitioners of great renown have changed much in the course of a century.

Mme. Golovine's condition was rapidly growing worse, and her door was closed to all importunate visitors, of whom, alas, Mme. de Tolstoy was more than ever one. 'We are very glad if we get as far as the drawing-room,' she remarked. She had one means, however, of revoking the orders for her non-admittance, by presenting herself with a letter that the Empress had entrusted to her for delivery :

'I sent word to her that I had a message from you, Madame, and she had me admitted. . . . She was much affected and touched. . . . I thought her very much changed. She has death and unheard-of suffering written in her face. . . . Though she is very resigned and patient, she says herself that she sometimes prays for death, as a benefit, and asks pardon of God for not bearing her sufferings better. . . . If anything can bring relief to her heart, it is hearing from you and talking about you, Madame. How she has blessed you, and what happiness she wishes you ! '

These lines are dated the 16th August 1821 ; less than a month later, on 13th September, Mme. Tolstoy wrote to the Empress to inform her of the death of the poor martyr. Mme. Golovine had breathed her last two days before, always patient and resigned, and 'retaining to the last day her old manner and mode of speech.' Her tomb is in the Père La Chaise cemetery, and is piously cared for by the descendants of her younger daughter. Those of her elder daughter have gone from the scene.

And gone, too, are the riches Count Golovine had spent so freely. But, in default of wealth, Barbara Nicolaievna has left her descendants a heritage that they think more precious : artistic gifts, a great facility with the pen, and an enthusiastic curiosity concerning all intellectual things. They have even inherited from her, her passionate predilection

for France. Paris exerts the same attraction, in a manner magnetic and irresistible, over them as over the author of the ' Recollections.' After having lived in Poland, in Russia, and in various European capitals, her two daughters came and settled here, and here ended their days. After surviving their parents, the two daughters of Countess Leo Potoçka, Countess Casimir Lançkoronska and Countess Andrew Mniszech, followed their example. They owned, in Paris, houses celebrated for the art collections that they contained. The second son of Countess Fredro, Dobieslas, who became a priest, and Count Leo Mniszech, the grandson of Mme. Leo Potoçka, were Parisians to their finger tips. No less than seven descendants of Barbara Nicolaievna are buried, with her, in the Père La Chaise cemetery, and two others in French soil, in a country district in Normandy.

The relatives of Barbara Nicolaievna, on her mother's side, who were settled in Russia, had a different destiny. Petrovskoie, as we have seen, is still in the hands of the Galitzines, and I owe to the brother of the present owner of this residence, Prince Michael, formerly master of the Court of the Grand Duke Vladimir, valuable hints which have greatly facilitated my task.

But now, I must hasten to give place to the author of the ' Recollections.' The MS. from which this edition is taken was found in the effects of Count Andrew Mniszech, and was given by his widow—his second wife, a Frenchwoman, née de La Gatinerie—to Baron Léon de Vaux. Contained in four books, bound in morocco, which certainly date back as far as the first quarter of the last century, two feminine writings appear in them. It is supposed that one of these two is the writing of Mme. Golovine herself. On this point I hardly venture to be certain. As it shows only very few erasures and corrections, the document can only be a copy, and, suffering from her eyes at the time when the ' Recollections ' were revised, and absorbed, further, as much as her enfeebled sight allowed, in artistic work, it is hardly likely that Barbara Nicolaievna would have spent her time in such a task. More probably the copy was made, under her supervision,

by her daughters, or perhaps, in part, written out by the Princess of Taranto. Unfortunately I am reduced to conjectures on this point. Some letters from the Princess of Taranto to Countess Golovine have been preserved at St. Petersburg in his Majesty's private library, and M. Léonce Pingaud mentions them, and gives some extracts from them in his study on Russians in Paris, published in *Le Correspondant* and separately (Paris, 1904). But it has not been possible for me personally to refer to this source, and, moreover, the archives of the La Tremoïlle family are at present inaccessible.

Mme. Fredro has also left 'Mémoires,' which I should have been happy to consult, and which I was promised should be sent to me, either in the original, or a copy, from two different sources. But, after long months of waiting and fruitless efforts, I have been obliged to make up my mind to renounce the hope of seeing them.

In any case the MS. mentioned above offers guarantees of superior authenticity to the others which we at present know. If an original has been preserved, nothing has so far proved its existence anywhere. The four books which I have made use of present, further, the peculiarity that, in each of them, a considerable number of blank pages were left, for appendices, apparently, or annotations, which have not been made.

It is perhaps not over rash to suppose that this copy is the actual one which was sent by the authoress to the Empress Elizabeth. There is, it is true, a legend to the effect that one copy of the 'Recollections' was preserved at the Winter Palace, and eventually burnt by order of the Emperor Nicholas, who certainly ordered many destructions of the kind. If even a part of the correspondence of Elizabeth Alexieievna escaped destruction, it was through passing, I can hardly suggest in what manner, into the hands of strangers.

But the copy of the 'Recollections' which Mme. Golovine sent to the Empress was restored to her, as she expressly mentions.

Whether it be this one or another, this MS. formerly served as a copy to others, two of which, in four similar books, but of subsequent copying, were handed to me by Count Lançkoronski. The Russian edition was drawn up from these two copies, collated with another from the library of Count Leon Mniszech, and another, from the same source, belonging to Count Gregory Stroganov in Rome.

The author's own language (the 'Recollections' were written in French) flows naturally, without stiffness or affectation of any sort; it is simple, clear, and perfectly easy, and may easily be forgiven a few weaknesses of style.

Mme. Golovine excels in narration and in the staging of facts and personages. Her incursions into the domain of philosophical commentary are less successful, but likewise not so frequent.

The 'Recollections' are valuable because they evoke for us a period which, in public as in private life, abounded in remarkable features, but also because they show us so many picturesque and piquant pictures of personalities and events, as they were reflected in the mind of an artist and a woman most admirably fitted to make a collection of the impressions produced upon her, and to interpret their varied aspects.

In addition to those I have previously mentioned, many portraits representing Mme. Golovine at various ages have been preserved. Incontestably the best is the one from the brush of Mme. Vigée-Lebrun. As, however, it is already sufficiently well known, doubtless the readers of 'Recollections' will be glad that I have placed, as frontispiece to this edition, another which, also the property of Count Lançkoronski, has the double merit of showing both the real talent for painting that the authoress possessed and a sincerity with her brush that may be regarded as a pledge of the honesty of her pen.

K. WALISZEWSKI.

PARIS, *November* 1910.

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THE RECOLLECTIONS
OF
COUNTESS GOLOVINE

PART I

THE LAST YEARS OF THE REIGN OF CATHERINE II

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I

THERE comes a time in life when we look back with regret on the leisure moments of those early days which offered everything fitted to satisfy us: youthful health, the freshness of ideas, the natural activity within us. Then, nothing seems impossible; we devote all our faculties to a thousand pleasures; objects pass before our eyes: we gaze at them with greater or lesser interest; some strike us, but we are swept away in the current of their diversity, and do not pause to consider them. We never seem able to settle. Imagination, the susceptibility of the heart,

the soul, which makes itself felt sometimes and disquiets us, and which seems to be warning us beforehand that it will triumph in the end : all these sensations disturb us, and agitate us without our being able to disentangle them.

That is much what I myself experienced, entering the world of society, as I did, very young.

My childhood was spent almost entirely in the country. My father, Prince Galitzine,[1] liked living in a gothic castle that had been given by the tsarinas to his ancestors.[2]

We left town in the month of April, and only went back in November. My mother was not rich, and had no opportunity of giving me a brilliant education. I hardly ever left her ; her tenderness and her goodness won my entire confidence. I can truthfully say that from the time I was able to speak I never hid anything from her. She allowed me to run about alone, to shoot with a bow and arrows, to go down the hill, to ramble about the plain as far as the river which washed its borders, to go for walks at the edge of the forest which shaded the windows of my father's apartments, and to climb an old oak at the side of the castle to gather acorns. But I was absolutely forbidden to tell an untruth, to speak unkindly of others, to neglect the unfortunate, or to look down on our neighbours. These latter were poor and dull, but good-hearted people. From the time I was eight years old my mother used purposely to leave me alone with them in the drawing-room to do the honours. She would go into the next room

[1] Nicholas Fiodorivitch, Lieutenant-General (born 1728, died 1780). Neither he nor his father played any important part in history.

[2] Petrovskoié, below Moscow, in the district of Zvenigorod. The word *gothic* as here used by Countess Golovine, merely means old, as will be seen later on. The estate belongs at the present time to Prince A. M. Galitzine, but the so-called gothic castle has been replaced by a palazzo of Italian style, built at the beginning of the last century by the brother of the authoress of the *Recollections*, Prince Theodore (Fiodor). The aspect of the country itself has changed : the river Moskva, at its confluence with the Istra, has no longer the same abundance of limpid water, and the oak forest which clothed its banks has disappeared. Details concerning Petrovskoié were published by Prince M. M. Galitzine in his *Matériaux pour l'histoire de la famille des princes Prozorovski*. Suppl. to the *Archives russes*, 1899, No. 7, pp. 48–53.

to work at her embroidery frame. She would thus be near enough to hear us, without making us feel ill at ease. When she left me, she would say: 'Believe me, my dear child, we are never more amiable than when we are indulgent, and never show ourselves possessed of more cleverness than when we yield to that of others,'—words sacred to me, and which have been very useful and have taught me never to feel anyone's company tedious.

I wish I had talent to describe this dwelling, which is one of the most beautiful in the neighbourhood of Moscow: the gothic castle with its four turrets; the galleries, with their latticed doors, leading to the two wings, inhabited the one by my mother and myself, the other by my father and the people who came to stay with us; the vast, beautiful forest that bordered the plain and sloped gradually away down to the confluence of the Istra and the Moskva. The sun used to set in the angle formed by the two rivers, which gave us a magnificent view. I would sit alone on the steps leading down from the gallery, or roam eagerly about the lovely country; I was profoundly affected by the beauties I saw, and my heart was specially attuned to prayer. I used to run in and out of our old gothic church; I would kneel in one of the little private rooms where the tsarinas used to pray; a solitary priest would be reading vespers in a low voice, one chorister alone replying; I was deeply impressed, often to tears. All this may sound exaggerated; but I tell it because it is the truth, and I am convinced by my own experience that we have presentiments from the morning of our lives, which are encouraged by a simple education, because such leaves a free course to one's natural temperament.

During this time I had the misfortune to lose my brother, aged eighteen.[1] He was as good and handsome as an angel. My mother was overwhelmed with grief. My eldest brother,[2]

[1] Prince Ivan Nikolaiévitch Galitzine, a sub-lieutenant in the Guards; born in 1759, died in 1777.

[2] Prince Fiodor Nikolaiévitch, surnamed 'the gentle knight,' later curator of the University of Moscow; born in 1751, died in 1827. He shared

then in France with my uncle, M. de Chouvalov,[1] came home to console her. I was delighted to see him; I was eager for knowledge and study; I overwhelmed him with questions which amused him greatly. I had a veritable passion for the arts without knowing anything about them.

We went to St. Petersburg to see my uncle, who had returned after an absence of fifteen years. I was ten at the time, and consequently quite a new acquaintance for him, and I presented a striking contrast to the children he had seen elsewhere. I had neither the manners nor the composed appearance that other little girls of my rank had. I jumped about and said whatever came into my head. My uncle took a great fancy to me. The affection that he had for my mother made him feel doubly tender towards me. He was a man most remarkable for his goodness. He played an important part during the reign of the Empress Elizabeth, and from that time became a patron of the arts. Catherine II received him with special favour, entrusted the University of Moscow to his charge, appointed him to the office of Lord Chamberlain, bestowed on him the Orders of Saint Andrew and Saint Vladimir, furnished his house, and did him the honour of coming to take supper with him. He was an excellent brother, and was a father to his sister's children. My mother loved him, I believe, more than her own life.

He had brought with him an infinity of objects of great antiquity; I had not eyes enough to see everything, I wanted to copy all I saw; he enjoyed my ecstatic delight and encouraged my inclinations.

Although our stay in the capital was not long, I had time to see and learn much. It was the year of the birth of the Grand Duke Alexander.[2] There were entertainments

the literary tastes of his sister, and likewise left behind him *Recollections*. (See *Archives russes*, 1874, vol. i.)

[1] Ivan Ivanovitch Chouvalov, Lord Chamberlain, favourite of the Empress Elizabeth, founder of the University of Moscow and of the Academy of Fine Arts; born in 1717, died in 1797.

[2] The future Emperor Alexander I, the first son of the Grand Duke Paul and his second wife, Sophia Dorothea of Wurtemberg-Montbéliard, by her marriage Grand Duchess and later the Empress Marie Feodorovna.

given by all the nobles. The Court attended them. There was a ball at Princess Repnine's;[1] a quadrille had been arranged for forty couples of children from about eleven to twelve years of age. One of the little dancers was taken ill four days before the ball, and Princess Repnine came with her daughters to implore my mother to let me take her place. My mother tried vainly to convince her that I hardly knew how to dance, that I was a child who had run wild in the woods; but nothing would satisfy them but that she should let me go. I was taken to a rehearsal; my childish vanity made me very attentive; the others, who were sure of themselves, or at any rate imagined that they knew the dance, were rehearsing carelessly. I had no time to lose; there were only to be two more rehearsals. I cast over in my mind what I could do, so as to dishonour as little as possible my first entrance into society. It occurred to me, when I got home, to draw out the figure of the quadrille on the parquet floor, and to practise by myself, singing the tune, which I remembered. I managed it quite well.

When the famous day arrived I won the approbation of all. The Empress showed me kindness, and the Grand Duchess took a fancy to me which lasted for sixteen years; but everything changes, and she, too, changed: I will speak of that matter in detail later. Her Majesty the Empress commanded my uncle to take me to her little gatherings at the Hermitage.[2] I went with him and my mother. The company was made up only of old marshals, aides-de-camp general, who were almost all old men, Countess Bruce, lady-in-waiting and friend of the Empress, some maids of honour, chamberlains and gentlemen in

[1] Nathalie Alexandrovna Kourakine, born 1737, died 1798, wife of the celebrated diplomatist and soldier of the time of Catherine II., Prince Nicholas Vassiliévitch, born in 1734, died in 1801. One of his daughters, Pauline, was soon to marry Countess Golovine's brother, Prince Theodore Galitzine.

[2] The private gatherings organised by Catherine at the celebrated Palace of the Hermitage. See Waliszewski, *Le Roman d'une Impératrice* pp. 516–7; *Autour d'un trône*, pp. 412–22.

waiting. We had supper at a mechanical table: the plates sank down when you pulled a cord which came through the table; under the plates there were little slates and a small pencil; you wrote what you wished for, pulled the cord, and in a few moments the plate rose again with what had been ordered. I was simply delighted with the little play, and my cord was in constant use.

I went twice to Moscow. Having had the misfortune to lose my father, my mother settled down in St. Petersburg, in my uncle's house. I was then fourteen years of age.

It was at this time that I first saw and noticed Count Golovine. I met him at the house of his aunt, the wife of Marshal Galitzine.[1] His reputation as a good son and a good subject, and the nobility of character that he showed, made a great impression upon me. His handsome face, his birth, his wealth, made him a very eligible *parti*. Each day I regarded him with less indifference. He singled me out from all the other ladies whom he met, and, without his having ventured to tell me so, I perceived this, and at once went to confide my thoughts to my mother, who pretended to attach no importance to the matter. She did not wish to affright my first romance. My great youth and the tour he was going to make in Europe gave her an opportunity of putting us both to the test.

During his absence, my mother was touchingly affectionate with me: his sister, Madame de Neledinski,[2] and his aunt, the wife of the Marshal, heaped me with kindnesses. I was more than affected by these tokens of their feelings for me, which only added fuel to the flame which was beginning seriously to invade my heart. I was asked in marriage more than once, but each match that was suggested by my

[1] Daria Alexiéievna, *née* Princess Gagarine, wife of Prince Alexander Mikhaïlovitch, 1724–98.

[2] Anastasia Nikolaiévna, wife of the Acting Privy Councillor, Alexander Jouriévitch Neledinski-Meletski. 'A little woman, as pleasing in mind and character as in appearance,' said the Chevalier de Corberon, alluding to the numerous conquests that she made.—*Journal intime*, vol. i. p. 180.

mother I instantly refused ; Count Golovine was first in my thoughts. At that time, the young people in society were more distinguished ; a young man attached importance to his marriage ; natural children were not legitimated : during the whole of the reign of the Empress Catherine there was only one instance, M. Tchesmenski, son of Count Alexis Orlov.[1] The Emperor Paul did more than abuse his power in this respect, and encouraged a depravity which has entirely destroyed the idea and principle of a sacred bond.

I continued to go to the little gatherings at the Hermitage. The Grand Duke Alexander used to be present ; he was then four years old, and his brother, the Grand Duke Constantine, three.[2]

Two violins were provided ; there was dancing ; I was the favourite partner of Alexander. One day, when the little ball was more lively than usual, the Grand Duke led the polonaise with me, and said to me, looking as serious as a child of that age could look, that he was going to take me to the very end room to show me something horrible. I was puzzled and embarrassed. When we arrived in the last room he led me into a corner, where a statue of Apollo stood ; the ancient sculptor's work was able, perhaps, to satisfy the eye of an artist, but it embarrassed a little girl, fortunately too ignorant to admire the perfection of the art at the expense of her modesty.

I venture to tell these little incidents to help me to remember what I saw at the Court. I cannot, with any justice, claim talent for myself. I cannot write Memoirs ; mine are not interesting enough. So this account can only be entitled ' Recollections.' I retain many which are very precious to me, and which often occupy my thoughts. It may well be of use to us thus to link the past more closely

[1] So called in remembrance of the naval battle of Tchesmé, in which, under nominal command of Alexis Orlov, and the actual orders of Admirals Elphinstone, Greig, and Dugdale, the Russian fleet defeated and set on fire the Turkish fleet, in the night of 6–7 July 1770.

[2] Born respectively on 12 December 1777 and 27 April 1779.

with the present. The past is like an account-book, which must be balanced that the present may be accurate and the future secure.

I have encountered more flowers than thorns in my journey through life. Their diversity and richness seem to multiply before me. I was happy. A pure happiness makes indifference impossible and inclines us to enjoy and take an interest in the happiness of others. Misfortune covers with a veil of sadness the objects around it, and brings us constantly back to the contemplation of our own sufferings, until God, by His infinite grace, opens a new outlet for our feelings and takes away their bitterness.

At sixteen years of age I was appointed a maid of honour. There were then only twelve. I went to Court every day. On Sunday there was a large gathering at the Hermitage; the diplomatic corps was admitted, and the two first classes, both of men and women. The Empress, on arriving in the drawing-room where the company were assembled, held a formal reception of her guests. Afterwards they followed her to the theatre. There was no supper. On Monday there was a ball and a supper at the Grand Duke Paul's. On Tuesday I was in attendance. My companion and I spent a part of the evening in the *Diamond Room*, which was so called on account of all the treasures it contained—among others, the crown, the sceptre, and the orb. The Empress played a game with her old servants. The two maids of honour were seated near one table; the gentlemen in attendance kept them company. On Thursday there was a smaller gathering at the Hermitage, with a ball, theatrical performance, and supper; the foreign Ministers were not present, but the other Sunday guests were there, and a few ladies, admitted by special favour. On Saturday there was a delightful entertainment at the home of the heir to the throne. You went straight in to the theatre; as soon as their Imperial Highnesses appeared, the play began: a very animated ball occupied the evening until time for supper, which was served in the theatre; the large table was in the middle of the room and the small

ones in the boxes. The Grand Duke and the Grand Duchess took their supper walking about, and did the honours to perfection. The ball began again after supper and ended very late. We went home by torchlight, which produced a novel and pleasing effect on the ice of the beautiful Neva.

This time was one of the most brilliant in the history of the Court and the capital; everything was harmonious. The Grand Duke saw the Empress, his mother, every morning and evening. He was admitted to her private Council. The town was filled with the most distinguished families. Every day thirty or forty people were to be met with at the houses of Marshal Galitzine,[1] Marshal Razoumovski,[2] Count Panine,[3] Prime Minister, where the Grand Duke and Grand Duchess often went, Count Tchernichov,[4] and Count Ostermann,[5] the Vice-Chancellor. In their houses a concourse of foreigners were to be met with, who came to see and admire the great Catherine. The diplomatic corps was composed, without exception, of most pleasant persons; the tone of society, in general, was perfect.

2

In 1786 Count Golovine came back to Russia, after an absence of four years. It was near Easter, and I had gone to the palace to kiss the sovereign's hand. All Court and town were present that day at the chapel of the castle; there was a huge crowd, the palace square being full of handsome turn-outs. Everything presented a magnificent and noble

[1] Prince Alexander Mikhaïlovitch, born in 1718, died in 1783; victor at Khotine over the Turks (17 September 1769).

[2] Cyril Grigoriévitch, brother of the Empress Elizabeth's favourite; hetman of the Cossacks, with the rank of field-marshal, 1724–1803.

[3] Nikita Ivanovitch, tutor of the Grand Duke Paul and head of the department of Foreign Affairs; born in 1718, died in 1783.

[4] Ivan Grigoriévitch, Vice-President of the Board of Admiralty, 1726–97.

[5] Ivan Andréiévitch, 1785–1811. He was to be dismissed by Paul.

aspect, and, at that time, people imagined that Paradise was at the palace. After kissing hands, we went into the salon of the Grand Duke and Grand Duchess, to offer them our greetings, and I had hardly entered the room when I perceived my husband by one of the windows. Fear of betraying myself increased my confusion. To a pure and lawful love there belongs a kind of shyness that affection subdues. It is like a sweet dream without agitation; its awaking is tranquil; regret and remorse it does not know; esteem and friendship hasten with hands outstretched to meet it.

Happy she whose lot it is to experience this. A mother who is in her daughter's confidence prepares her for it, for a void in the heart is one of the greatest dangers. A gentle feeding of its needs is its safeguard. The feelings are the source of all life—life, which is like a brook flowing on through torrents and fertile and smiling plains to the ocean, where it empties itself into the infinite immensity of the sea.

I was betrothed in the month of July. The Grand Duchess, who then heaped kindness and favours upon me, wrote me the following note:

'I congratulate you, dear little one, on the happy event that is to settle your feelings and make you, I trust and hope, as happy as I should wish you to be. May you enjoy the most perfect happiness. Be as good a wife as you are a good child, and, in spite of the feelings that you owe to your dear future husband, always love your good friend

'Marie.'

'I send my love to mamma, and congratulate her sincerely, as also your dear uncle. My husband is most keenly interested in your happiness.'

At nineteen I was married, my husband being twenty-nine. The wedding was celebrated in the Winter Castle on 4 October, and her Imperial Majesty fastened my diamonds on my head. The Baroness de Maltitz, the gover-

ness of the maids of honour, presented them to her on a tray, and to the ordinary precious stones the Empress added a cornucopia. This attention did not escape the governess, who was fond of me, and she remarked upon it, when her Majesty was good enough to say that she chose this ornament and made this distinction in the case of the brides who pleased her most. This made me blush with pleasure and gratitude. The Empress saw my delight, and gently raising my chin, her Majesty did me the honour of saying: 'Look at me; really, you are rather pretty.'

I rose; she led me into her bedroom where the pictures were, took one, and told me to make the sign of the cross and kiss the picture. I knelt down to receive her Majesty's blessing, when she took me in her arms and, her voice and look very tender, said to me: 'May you be happy; I wish it you with all the love of a mother and the affection of a sovereign on whom you may always depend.'

The Empress kept her word; her kindness to me only grew more as time passed, and lasted until her death.

When I was twenty I had a terrible accouchement. In the eighth month a frightful attack of measles brought me to the verge of the grave. This was during the Empress's journey to the Crimea, when, of course, some of the doctors were with her Majesty, while the others were at Gatchina, a castle occupied by the Grand Duke Paul during part of the summer. As the young Grand Dukes and Grand Duchesses had never had this malady, the doctors could not attend me, and I was reduced to the care of a regimental surgeon; he forced the humours inwards, the child had fits, and I suffered mortal agonies. Count Stroganov,[1] who was very much attached to me, hastened to the Grand Duchess and told her of my sad plight, whereupon she at once sent me a doctor and accoucheur. My sufferings were such that they gave me opium, which sent me to sleep for twelve hours; and when I woke from this lethargy I had no strength left for my delivery, and it was necessary to have recourse

[1] Alexander Serguiéiévitch, Grand Chamberlain, later on President of the Academy of Fine Arts; born in 1734, died in 1811.

to instruments. I bore the cruel operation bravely; my husband stood near me, scarcely breathing with anxiety and suspense. The child died in twenty-four hours, but I only knew it three weeks later. I was at death's door myself, but I kept on asking for it, to which they always replied that the emotion I should feel on seeing it would do me too much harm. When I was better the Grand Duchess sent her friend, Mme. de Benckendorf,[1] to me with a very kind note, which I will transcribe here:

'I congratulate you, dear Countess, on your delivery, and I most sincerely hope for your prompt convalescence. Be of good courage, dear little one, and, please God, you will soon be enjoying the happiness of being a mamma without remembering the sufferings you have endured. Benckendorf will tell you how much I love you.

'Your good friend,

'MARIE.'

I received many very flattering and touching tokens of interest during my illness, and people were constantly stopping at my door to inquire how I was. Even people whom I did not know showed me kindnesses. Four houses from mine lived a Mme. Kniajnine, whom I never saw or knew; one evening that she heard a barrel organ going towards the side of the house under my windows, she sent all her servants and ran out herself to stop the musicians, repeating over and over again that they must not play so near a lady who was dying. My youth and my domestic happiness were the reason of this general good will, for my marriage seemed to interest everybody—I suppose because people like to see a happy household: the old from remembrance, and the young by comparing it with others.

My convalescence was rapid, but I was long in recovering

[1] Juliana Schilling de Canstadt, who came to Russia with the Grand Duchess and had there married Christopher de Benckendorff, a member of a Prussian family settled in Russia, Colonel and later General. Their daughter, Daria Khristoforovna, was the celebrated Princess de Lieven. Born in 1758, Mme. de Benckendorf died in 1797.

my usual spirits. For a long time I could not hear the cry of a child without feeling faint; still, the care of the friends by whom I was surrounded eventually restored me to tranquillity.

Her Imperial Majesty then returned from her Crimean travels. My uncle, who had been one of her party, greeted me most affectionately on seeing me again; he was so thankful to find me recovered.

The Empress's journey was a very remarkable one, and deserved to be more celebrated than it afterwards was. Her Majesty was accompanied by Mr. FitzHerbert, afterwards Lord St. Helens, the English Minister; the Comte de Ségur, the French Minister; Count Louis de Cobenzl, the ambassador of the Emperor of Germany; my uncle; the Countess of Protassov;[1] and the Countess Braniçka.[2] Prince Potemkine, who had preceded her, had prepared a large escort for her, but she refused it. The Emperor Joseph, who came to meet her, expressed his astonishment at this neglect of precaution; the Empress did not reply to the remarks that he made, but events justified her conduct. The recently conquered Tartars received her with enthusiasm. When her Majesty's carriage was on a very steep hill the horses ran away, and she was in danger of being thrown out, when the inhabitants of the neighbouring villages, who had assembled to see the sovereign pass, rushed in front of the horses and succeeded in stopping them. Several persons were killed, and others wounded, but it was with cries of joy only that the air rang. 'Ah!' said the Emperor, 'I see that you do not need a guard.'

The foreign Ministers were all enthusiastic about the journey. I remember an amusing story which was told

[1] Anne Stepanovna, an elderly maid of honour and an intimate friend of Catherine II. Born in 1745, died in 1826, she figured at the Congress of Vienna, and aimed at being an important figure in the drawing-rooms, of which she was the scarecrow. See Waliszewski, *Autour d'un trône*, pp. 103, 158, 397, 427.

[2] Alexandrine Vassiliévna Engelhardt, born 1754, died in 1838, niece of Potemkine; married to François-Xavier Braniçki, last Grand General of Poland.

me by Ambassador Count de Cobenzl. The Empress was travelling in her carriage with seats for six. The Emperor, his ambassador, and my uncle always had a place in it. The Ministers and the two ladies were admitted in turn. The Empress that day was wearing a very handsome velvet pelisse, upon which the ambassador complimented her. 'One of my servants looks after this part of my wardrobe,' she replied; 'he is too great a fool for anything else.' The Comte de Ségur, whose thoughts had been wandering, and who had only heard the compliments upon the cloak, hastened to add: 'Like master, like servant.' This unintentional joke caused a great deal of laughter.

The same day, at dinner, Count Cobenzl being, as always, at the Empress's side, she remarked in jest that he must be tired of always having her for a neighbour. 'We do not choose our neighbours,' he replied. This second unfortunate remark was greeted with the same hilarity as the first.

After supper her Majesty told a story, and Lord St. Helens, who had been momentarily out of the room, came in as she finished speaking. The other Ministers expressed their regret at his having missed the pleasure, whereupon the Empress offered to tell the story again, but she was hardly half through her narration before Lord St. Helens was fast asleep. 'This was the only thing lacking, gentlemen, to complete your kindness; I am completely satisfied.'

In the year 1780 my husband became Colonel. The Empress gave him a regiment, and he had to rejoin the army—a separation which was very painful to me. I was just recovering from a confinement, and I was still very weak. My husband's absence was of several months' duration, and he returned only to leave me again. He hoped to come back to me soon; but the circumstances of the war [1] had in the meantime changed, and he found it impossible to join me, so, thinking he would be going back

[1] The second war with Turkey, which began in July 1787 and terminated in January 1792, with the recognition of the annexation of the Crimea (Treaty of Jassy).

into military quarters with his regiment, he asked me to go to him and sent two petty officers to fetch me. Although the order was very welcome to me, my pleasure was marred by the thought of the trouble that my departure would be to my mother.

My dear mother busied herself with preparations for my journey, found a surgeon for me, took every possible precaution on my account, added an officer to my escort, and obliged me to take with me a lady companion who lived in her own house. This lady proved the best, but the most cowardly of women. My mother accompanied me as far as Tsarskoie-Sielo, where I received a note from my brother, who was in attendance on the Grand Duke at Gatchina. He had sent to tell me that the Grand Duchess insisted on my going to bid her farewell; it was on my way, but I was only in travelling dress, and encumbered with travelling impedimenta; the weather was cold, too, and the way in front of me long and uncomfortable.

However, as her Imperial Highness insisted on seeing me in my cape and travelling garments, I had to dispense with ceremony. On my arrival I was taken into Mme. de Benckendorf's rooms, whence the Grand Duchess sent for me immediately after. I entered her boudoir, where she was waiting for me, and she took me in her arms and said the most charming things about my conjugal obedience, made me sit down at her writing-table, ordered me to write to my mother, talked to me for a long time, sent for the Grand Duke, made him kiss me, and finally said good-bye to me with great feeling.

And now you see me hastening at full speed towards Bessarabia. I was twenty-two years of age, and I was full of health and courage. At some distance from Vitebsk I got out of my carriage while the horses were being changed, and entering a sort of booth, where I sat down on a table —because the chairs were broken—I had a few tablets of soup steeped as a refreshment. Suddenly, with a great commotion, a soldier appeared and handed me a letter and a large package. I was overjoyed to recognise my

mother's writing, and quite forgot the bearer; but after I had recovered somewhat from my excitement, I recognised the Comte de Langeron, a French *émigré*, who was on his way to volunteer for service in the Grand Army.[1] I had met him at St. Petersburg, at Count Cobenzl's and at the Princess of Nassau's.

After thanking him, I sat down again on the table to finish my soup, at which he was gazing with envious eyes, but which I made haste to finish to prove to him that I was not inclined to share it with him, that I did not wish for his company, and that he might go. He did so. The door being open, I heard him ask in the next room for some milk, quickly. A large, well-filled bowl, together with a piece of bread, was brought to him at once by a Jewess; but as he ate walking about, and always glancing in my direction, I was annoyed, and entered my carriage, which had the horses put to a moment later.

I arrived at Chklov the next morning, and was in a most urgent hurry to proceed, for I knew that the landowner of this district, M. Zoritch,[2] a gallant and magnificent gentleman, was fond of doing the honours to strangers who were in any way distinguished. I had hardly entered the courtyard of the posting-house before I called out for horses; but suddenly the Comte de Langeron, who had had time to get ahead of me, and Count de Zucato[3] appeared

[1] Born in Paris in 1763, died at St. Petersburg in 1831, after having fought in America under the orders of Rochambeau, and in Russia against the Turks, and, alas! also against the French; invaded Champagne with the army of the Princes, and a second time with Blücher's army; commanded a Russian corps at Austerlitz, at the Beresina, and at Leipzig. His *Memoirs*, for the most part unpublished, are in the Archives of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in Paris.

[2] Simon Gavrillovitch, 1745–99, ex-favourite of Catherine II, was of Croatian origin. He was dismissed in 1778, and had built at Chklov, an estate he owed to the generosity of the sovereign, a magnificent castle, where he lived in princely style, and where Catherine accepted his hospitality. He also founded there a military school. (See Waliszewski, *Autour d'un trône*, pp. 335–8.)

[3] Count Eugene, later Major-General and member of the War Office.

at the door of my carriage, muffled up to the ears in dressing-gowns, and voluble in their excuses for appearing in such a garb. I could not help laughing at them; but, to cut short their visit, I went down to a building at the bottom of the yard, where nobody was, to wait for my horses, where I had only just sat down when I heard the cracking of whips and saw drive into the courtyard a gilded barouche, drawn by magnificent horses. I shuddered to recognise M. Zoritch, whom I had met at Court in my childhood. He went down on his knees to implore me to dine at his house. I summoned all my eloquence to assist me in refusing the invitation, but he would listen to no excuses. I had to get into the carriage with him and let him drive me to his nieces', where I was to stay until he came to fetch me. This arrangement was, as a matter of fact, the correct and proper one, for M. Zoritch, not being married, naturally did not wish to remain alone with me for two hours before dinner.

His nieces were quite new acquaintances for me. I had never seen them, nor even heard of them before. They were very busy with costumes for a ball which was to take place on the morrow, and did me the honour of asking my advice, so, to please them, I drew models of hats, toques, dresses, and caps. They were delighted with me, and thought me charming.

At dinner time M. Zoritch returned to assist me into his elegant barouche, and then took his seat in front of me. My costume was a perfect contrast to his own: I had on a little black beaver hat with a feather in it, and a blue waistcoat with a red collar, the colours of my husband's uniform; while M. Zoritch wore five pigeon-wing curls, an embroidered coat, and a hat under his arm, and was as highly perfumed as a sultan. I had to bite my lips not to laugh.

We arrived, and he handed me into a drawing-room in which were assembled at least sixty persons, of whom I knew only three: the Comte de Langeron, Count Zucato, and Mlle. Engelhardt, a very handsome woman, related to the

nieces of Prince Potemkine, to whom I clung with desperation. The dinner was long and tiring from too much profusion. I was longing for the moment when I should be able to escape, but I had to stay all day, and even remain to supper.

I left at last with ten grand couriers, furnished by M. Zoritch, who were to take me to Mokhilov with all possible speed. I certainly arrived there very quickly, much fatigued with all the honours that had been heaped upon me. We pulled up at the door of a very pretty two-storied stone house, and I ran up the stairs as fast as I could, hurried through all the rooms, and, in the last, flung myself down on a couch, where I fell fast asleep. I was awakened at seven o'clock in the morning by the arrival of the commanding officer of the town,[1] who had come to place his services at my disposal and to overwhelm me with questions on politics and the Court.

I replied to everything with brazen assurance, and hardly had he ended his visit, and I completed my toilet, than an aide-de-camp arrived from M. Passek,[2] the governor of the town and a distant relative of ours, to bring me an invitation to dine at his country house, five or six versts from the town, and to offer his carriage. I accepted; a gilded carriage with two seats and five glass panels, harnessed with four grey horses, came to fetch me. I drove through the town in great pomp; the Jews, recognising the governor's carriage, fell on their knees before me, and I bowed to right and left, greatly amused at the farce.

I received a delightful welcome on my arrival at the castle, and I was shown a very lovely garden and charming views, and given a very good dinner, after which I played a game of chess with a gentleman whom I had never seen before; then took leave of my host and went back to my carriages, to start off again at once.

The second day after my departure from Mokhilov I received a large packet at a post-house that I stopped at.

[1] N. M. Engelhardt.

[2] Pierre Bogdanovitch, then Governor of White Russia, had been one of Catherine II's assistants in the *coup d'état* of 1762. Born 1736, died in 1802.

I was overjoyed, thinking it was from my mother; but my delight was changed to surprise on seeing a poetic epistle, accompanied by a very respectful letter, from the Comte de Langeron. I was furious at my mistake, and vowed I would have my revenge. At a day's journey from Krementchoug, in a little town where I was making a hasty meal while the horses were being changed, M. de Langeron appeared. 'Never have well-turned verses met with a worse reception than yours,' I said to him. 'Your packet caused me a cruel disappointment, for I had taken it for a letter from my mother. This disappointing mistake of mine took from me all power of appreciating the charms of your poetry.' He looked contrite, and said, with a sigh, that he was very unhappy; that he had just heard from Paris that his wife was lying at the point of death.[1] He then asked me to give him letters of introduction to my husband and to Princess Dolgorouki,[2] as he hoped to arrive at least two days before me. I sat down to write them at once; I called him a poet, and a knight seeking adventures and finding none, and a sentimental husband, who mourned the passing of his wife by writing verses. I folded the two letters and handed them to him unsealed. He took leave of me, but as I was getting into my carriage I received a huge water-melon and some more verses from him. Fortunately they were the last.

I arrived at Krementchoug in cold and disagreeable weather. Some of my carriages being in need of repairs, I entered a wooden palace that had been erected for the Empress's journey to the Crimea and ordered myself a little dinner. While I was engaged in rearranging my dress, the commanding officer of the town, who was a Swede, was announced. After paying me the most elaborate compliments, he proposed my dining at his house, telling me that he had been informed of my arrival and had prepared

[1] Nathalie Petrovna Troubetskoï.

[2] Catherine Fiodorovna Bariatinski, born 1769, died 1849; wife of Prince Vassili Vassilievitch Dolgorouki, and, for the moment, chief favourite of Prince Potemkine.

everything for my reception, but apologised beforehand for his wife, who, being very ill, could not pay me the honour that on his own showing was due to me. So I had perforce to go off with him. We entered a carriage to seat two, dirty and with poor horses, and came to a one-storied wooden house ; he there handed me into a small drawing-room, and suggested that I should go into the next room, where his wife was in bed. I accepted, but to my intense surprise discovered that the lady who lay, all covered in white, on a couch in the semi-darkened room, was—a negress ! Her complexion was quite indistinct in the shadows of the room. She apologised for not rising in a weak, soft voice ; so I sat down by her side, begging her not to disturb herself, and kept her company until dinner, which was anything but a dainty repast.

A regular charivari of an orchestra grated on my ears, and a choir of voices out of tune accompanied it ; my host was enraptured with the melody, and kept repeating that it was Prince Potemkine's favourite tune. When the dinner was over and my carriages repaired, the Swedish gentleman accompanied me as far as the boat on which I was to cross the Boh. This river is of imposing size, and somewhat dangerous to cross, and my companion was trembling with fright. As for me, I enjoyed the variety of the waves through which my boat ploughed its way. The weather was cloudy, the wind rather high ; the waves broke one against another and changed their shape with extreme rapidity ; that which was a grey mass one moment was brightness the next, and the eye could hardly follow the movements of the water. I watched it, fascinated. Everything is a surprise in Nature : her wealth is immense, as her Author is infinite.

The appearance of the deserts of Bessarabia was quite novel to me. To the right I saw an interminable plain, treeless, and without habitations other than some Cossack stations, with a few beautiful flowers scattered here and there on the parched-up turf ; on the left were some fairly high mountains. These Cossack stations are underground

huts, of which only the sugar-loaf thatched roofs are visible outside. Lances stuck in the ground all round shine with the brilliance of stars. I stopped at one during the night to change horses. The moon was brilliantly light, the weather magnificent; and as I got out of my carriage I heard the music of a guitar, the long notes of which, underground, had a weirdly magical effect. Except for these harmonious chords, the silence round me was absolute. I was almost sorry to go on, but all was ready for me to set out again, and I was nearing the eagerly long-looked-for end of my journey. One predominant desire makes us lose sight of the present, everything seems to become accessory to the point at which we are gazing though we cannot see it, the eyes of the soul eclipse our ordinary sight.

The next day I had no food, and had to have recourse to the dinner of the Cossacks. Approaching one hut, I heard joyful shouts: 'Long live Catherine the Great! Long live our Mother, who gives us bread and food and glory! Long live Catherine!' These words riveted me to the spot. I had neither ears enough to hear nor heart enough to take them in. Never did I meet with such appropriate and real enthusiasm. This homage in a desert, two thousand miles away from the capital, was very touching.

I alighted at this habitation, where the gaiety was at its height on account of a wedding. I was offered something to drink, but asked for food. They immediately cooked, in my presence, a kind of cake, quite new to me: they were made of rye-flour, mixed with water. This was worked into a paste and flattened: a skimmed-milk cheese was placed in the middle, the edges were then folded in, and the whole tossed into a saucepan of boiling water. In ten minutes the cakes were brought to me, and I ate six and thought them excellent. My companions did the same, and then we left.

After a two hours' drive we arrived at another station. In spite of my six cheese pasties, I was still very hungry. Putting my head out of the window of my carriage, I saw

a gentleman sitting under a little tent at the bottom of a hill, his undivided attention concentrated on his meal. I asked who it was, and learnt that it was Colonel Ribeaupierre, whom I knew and was very fond of.[1] I sent word to him that I was starving, and that I should be so glad if he would give me a share of his dinner. As soon as he recognised me, he hurried to my carriage and brought me half a roast duck and some wine and water. He was delighted to render me this small service, while I was very pleased to receive it from him. When I was with the army I met with him again. He was unhappy, courted danger, and was killed at the siege of Ismaïl.

The next day, at seventy versts from Bender, we came to a tolerably high mountain. The weather was very warm, the road sandy, and the horses had difficulty in getting along. I suggested to my companion and my maid that they should walk, and they did so. The carriage was then dragged off the road and the horses led along the grass, I being left alone inside with the two doors of the carriage open, in case of accident. In a quarter of an hour I heard a bell on the main road, and caught sight of a small courier's cart; in it was a man standing up and looking about him, and I recognised my husband. I sprang out of my carriage; he did the same; I was a very happy woman. My companion and maid then hurried up. My husband took the post-chaise, in which the officer and my doctor had been travelling, and carried me off with him, leaving the other carriages to follow.

So we drove away over hills and mountains, along a stony road, until ten o'clock at night, when we arrived in the capital of Bessarabia. We crossed the bridge over the

[1] Ivan Stepanovitch (Jean), 1750–90. Of Swiss or Alsatian origin, he belonged to a family who were supposed to have emigrated at the time of the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. Having come to St. Petersburg on an errand for Grimm, Catherine's correspondent and general factotum, he had afterwards been mixed up with the matter of the marriage intended by the Empress's favourite, Mamonov, with Princess Chtcherbatov, and was in disgrace. See Waliszewski, *Autour d'un trône*, pp. 353 and after, 404 and after.

Dniester on foot, and my husband took me to see Princess Dolgorouki. She was sitting in a small drawing-room with her back to the door. With her was Mme. de Witt, now Countess Potoçka.[1] At the other end of the room there was a card-table round which were seated a group of players very much absorbed in their game. I slipped behind the Princess's chair and placed my hands over her eyes. She screamed and I stepped back; Mme. de Witt, seeing a stranger, did not speak; the men exclaimed without turning their heads, 'Another bat, no doubt!' (One had come in the evening before, and the Princess had been alarmed by it.) I came out of my hiding-place, and exclamations of delight filled the little Turkish drawing-room. We had supper, and afterwards I was brought home.

My little home was not yet quite finished, and the divan was not in position; my carriages not having arrived, my husband spread his cloak on the ground and made me a pillow of his uniform, put a light on the floor, and sat down by my side to guard me.

I slept splendidly. When I woke I went all through my house, which consisted of three rooms, leading one out of the other, the one in the middle containing the outer door. My bedroom was panelled; it had a door ornamented all over with crescents, and on the back wall two great doors opened out of one of the retreats in which the Turks kept their women. The ceiling was also panelled, and the floor of well-beaten earth; the windows had wooden gratings, and, in place of window glass, there was transparent paper, which certainly admitted the light but nothing more.

I opened my window to look out into the courtyard. Against the house there were vines, bearing dried-up grapes, and a large cherry-tree with no fruit on it, the season being

[1] Sophia, known as 'the fair Fanariote,' born in 1761 near Constantinople, was a slave, purchased for a few piastres by Boscamp, envoy of the King of Poland; later she became the wife of Colonel de Witt, the Polish commandant of the fortress of Kamiéniéts, in Podolia; taken in 1781 by the Princess of Nassau to Paris, where her beauty caused a great sensation, she eventually married, after being divorced, the richest nobleman in Poland, Count Felix Potoçki. She died in 1822.

over. I was feeling sad, for my husband had received orders to besiege Kilia. He had been given an infantry command, his own regiment being light horse. The idea of the separation upset me very much, the more so as I now found myself alone in the camp, with the prospect of seeing Prince Potemkine arrive in ten days.

The day my husband left, I shut myself up in my house plunged in my own melancholy thoughts. All the people round me, as I saw, thought of nothing but the Prince's arrival, but the prospect of it was exceedingly unpleasant to me. At last he arrived, and sent to invite me to his house in the evening. Princess Dolgorouki said to me: 'Be very careful with the Prince, he is like a sovereign here.' 'I know him, Princess,' I replied; 'I saw him at Court, and he has dined at my uncle's; I do not know why I need single him out from all the others that I have met.'

This little piece of advice was given me in the carriage as we were going to the Prince's. He came forward to meet me with the most eager demonstrations of friendship. 'I am very glad to see you, Prince,' I said to him, 'but I will confess that the object of my journey was not to meet you. But you have taken my husband away from me, and now I am a prisoner in your hands.'

I sat down; the room, which was very large, was filled with generals, amongst others Prince Repnine,[1] who was held in great respect,—a fact which shocked me greatly and made me bolder. I am alone, I thought to myself, and I have no one to advise me; I must be proud and dignified. And I found this plan successful.

The evening entertainments at Prince Potemkine's became more and more frequent; Asiatic magic and magnificence were carried to the last degree; nor did I fail to notice his passionate attentions to Princess Dolgorouki. She restrained herself for a time in my presence, but her vanity was too strong for her, and soon she gave way to a coquetry so shocking that it estranged her from

[1] Nicholas Vassilïévitch (1734–1801).

me more and more. Everything round me was displeasing to me; the very air I breathed seemed contaminated.

On the days when there was no ball, the evening was spent in a divan salon. This divan was covered with Turkish cloth,[1] of rose-pink and silver fabric; a similar cloth, interwoven with gold, was under our feet. On a magnificent table stood a filigree scent-box, which filled the air with Arabian perfumes. Different teas were served. The Prince almost always wore a coat edged with sable, and the diamond star and ribbon of the Orders of Saint Andrew and Saint George. The Princess wore approximately the costume of a favourite sultana, nothing lacking but the trousers; Mme. de Witt flung herself about and acted a part which suited her ill. Mlle. Pachkow, afterwards Mme. de Lanskoï,[2] who lived with the Princess, kept herself as much aloof as she could. I spent a great part of the evening playing chess with Prince Charles of Wurtemberg[3] and Prince Repnine. Princess Dolgorouki never left Prince Potemkine. Supper was served in a very beautiful room; the dishes were carried in by tall cuirassiers, with red capes and very high caps covered with black fur and surmounted by a tuft of feathers; their shoulder-belts were silver. They walked two by two in pairs, and to me looked like the Guards in tragedy plays. During the meal a splendid orchestra, accompanied by fifty cornets, played beautiful symphonies, Sarti being the conductor.[4] Everything was magnificent and on a gigantic scale, but everything was spoilt for me. It is impossible calmly to enjoy when your principles are constantly being shocked.

I will not describe in detail the events of every day. It was the most disagreeable time in my life. This impure love, based on vanity; my forced acquaintance with Mme. de Witt, who only inspired in me feelings of contempt

[1] Sirsacas.

[2] Barbara Matviéievna, wife of Vassili Serguiélévitch Lanskoï, member of the Council of Empire.

[3] Brother of the Grand Duchess Marie Féodorovna (1771–1833).

[4] Joseph Sarti, a composer of great reputation at the time. His best opera is called 'Armide.'

and a kind of irksome pity,—everything was in sharp contrast with my own heart. I only lived in the hope of escaping.

One evening I heard cannon shots. My heart seemed to stop beating. They were to announce the taking of Kilia.[1] My husband was well, and I was delighted, half wild with joy. The next day I attended the Te Deum service. After the ceremony, I went up to the Prince and asked him to send for my husband. ' I will send the order for it at once,' he said, ' and I will let you see a copy, so that you may see what I say' ; and, indeed, I had hardly entered my own house when a paper was brought to me on which was written that Count Golovine was to be sent back to his wife as soon as possible, even if he did not wish to come. The next day my husband arrived on horseback ; he had only been a hundred versts away. I breathed once more. This was in the month of November ; I decided to wait till Saint Catherine's day, as the Prince was preparing a magnificent entertainment at which I thought it would be amiable on my part to be present. He overwhelmed me all the time with kindness and attentions.

The day arrived. He took us in *linieiki*[2] through an army of two hundred thousand men, drawn up along the two sides of the road and presenting arms. We went down into an immense subterranean hall, richly hung. Facing a very handsome divan was a kind of gallery filled with musicians. The sound of the instruments was a little deadened underground, but the effect produced was only the more beautiful. A splendid supper wound up the evening, and we returned in the same carriages between the ranks of the same warrior army. A rolling fire glittered through the dark night as the procession spread out. Torches filled with lighted pitch served as lanterns. It was fine and grand, but I was not sorry to get home.

The next day I sent for General Rakhmanov,[3] who was very fond of me ; I begged him to ask the Prince, whose

[1] 18 October 1790.

[2] Very light carriages, suspended on a kind of shaft.

[3] Gabriel Mikhaïlovitch. He was only a Colonel at this time.

favourite he was, to give my husband six months' leave of absence. He replied that the Prince would be more pleased if I wrote to him. I insisted on his simply taking my message, adding that I would see afterwards what I had better do. He came back and told me that the Prince begged me to write him a note, that he might have the pleasure of giving me a written proof of the friendship and esteem in which he held me. So I hastily scribbled the nicest little note that I could, and gave it to M. Rakhmanov, who at once took charge of it and brought me back the kindest, I might almost say the most touching reply. I have it still.

I busied myself without loss of time with the preparations for my return journey. Prince Potemkine was grieved at my going, and Princess Dolgorouki was in despair, for she could not with decency remain with the army when she was the only woman. The evening before my departure I went to take leave of the Prince, and thank him for his attentions. The next morning I set out with my husband, delighted to escape from a life that was in no wise to my liking.

3

On my arrival in the month of January, I went straight to my mother's, only too happy to find myself in her arms again. My uncle and mother-in-law [1] received me most affectionately, and I found my little daughter wonderfully well, so that my happiness was complete.

A few days later I went to Court, where I was treated with great kindness by the Empress and the Grand Duchess. I still retained all my privileges of *entrée* to the little gatherings at the Hermitage, and, in short, resumed my former life.

Princess Dolgorouki came back in February, Prince Potemkine in March, the fortress of Ismaïl having been taken by assault,[2] which concluded the campaign. The

[1] Countess Anastasia Stiépanovna Golovine, *née* Lapoukhine.

[2] 11 December 1790.

Prince gave entertainments to the Court and to the town, each one more beautiful than the last, but none was more elaborate and novel than that given at the Taurida Palace, in a huge Moldavian hall with a double row of columns all round the room.[1] Two porticos shut off the centre, and between the two porticos was a winter garden, magnificently illuminated by concealed padellas. There were trees and flowers in profusion. The principal illumination, however, came from an inverted dome on the ceiling, from the middle of which was suspended the Empress's monogram in paste. This monogram, lit up by an invisible reflector, gave out a dazzling light.

A quadrille of at least fifty couples opened the ball. The company comprised all the most distinguished elements of society, and the presence of the Empress contributed not a little to the charm of the entertainment.[2]

The stay of Prince Potemkine in St. Petersburg lasted only two months. However, he allowed my husband to remain until the opening of the campaign. Peace was still hoped for. I had supper with the Prince the evening before he left, at the house of his niece, Mme. de Potemkine, now Princess Youssoupov,[3] and he said good-bye to me in quite an affecting manner, repeating over and over again that he could never forget me, and begging me to remember him. He asked me to spare him some regrets, for he had a certain presentiment that he was going to die. And on arriving at Jassy he fell ill and did die, after a few days' illness, in a plain to which he had ordered himself to be carried.[4]

My husband had then been with the army a month. The Empress sent Prince Bezborodko to treat for peace, and, as no officer could absent himself longer, I decided to write to him and ask for leave for my husband, which he

[1] It is to-day the outer hall of the Duma Chamber.

[2] It took place 28 April 1791.

[3] Tatiana Vassiliévna Engelhardt, whose first husband was related to M. S. Potemkine, the favourite.

[4] 5 October 1791, on the way from Jassy to Nikolaiev.

granted me. Peace was concluded shortly after, but war with Poland began again soon.[1] My husband was to join the army, and I to follow him. My mother and my mother-in-law were very distressed at the prospect of this fresh separation, which was troubling me very much myself, when one day Count Markov[2] came to inform me that the Empress was arranging a Court for her grandson, the Grand Duke Alexander, and that my husband was to be appointed Marshal.

This news was a great delight to all my family, the more so because the Empress had shown her opinion of my husband in a manner so flattering to him. This was in April; the 21st of the month was her Majesty's birthday, and the day on which the appointments at the Court of the Grand Duke Alexander were to be announced. I waited impatiently for the time to arrive, but it came at last. Count Rastoptchine,[3] a friend of my husband, came to see me before going to Court, to tell me that he meant to be the first to send me the good news. He had a hunchbacked English jockey, whom he had ordered to be in front of the palace, on horseback, and to keep his eyes fixed on a certain window that he had pointed out to him. As soon as he saw him appear at it and wave his handkerchief, he was to set off at full speed and hand me the following note :—

When the little hunchback
Appears on horseback,
Let there be heard a shout from all,
'Long live the Marshal!'

Shortly afterwards there was talk of a marriage between the Grand Duke Alexander and the Princess Louise of Baden.

[1] May–July 1792.

[2] Arcadius Ivanovitch (1747–1827), afterwards ambassador in Paris.

[3] Theodore Vassiliévitch, born 1765, died 1826; in great favour with the Grand Duke Paul, and destined to become his first Minister. 'Except Golovine and Toutolmine, all his Court (the Court of the Grand Duke Alexander) is made up of blackguards or fools,' he wrote in May 1794 (*Archives Vorontsov*, vol. viii., p. 95).

CHAPTER II

1792—1794

1. The betrothal of the Grand Duke Alexander—Princess Louise of Baden, afterwards the Empress Elizabeth—An idyll. 2. At Tsarskoie Sielo—' La grosse Maréchale '—Catherine the Great—The death of Peter III—The Empress's private circle. 3. The betrothed pair—The Grand Duke Constantine—A few portraits. 4. The marriage of the Grand Duke Alexander—His parents—Entertainments and receptions.

I

The Empress sent Countess Chouvalov[1] and Monsieur de Strekalov[2] to the Court of the Margrave of Baden, to ask his permission and that of the Hereditary Prince and Princess for their daughter, Princess Louise, to pay a visit to Russia. She arrived on 31 October 1792, accompanied by her sister, the Princess Frederica, afterwards Queen of Sweden. Princess Louise was then thirteen and a-half years old, her sister one year younger, and their arrival caused a great sensation. The ladies admitted to the Hermitage and the Court were presented to them privately; but I was not of the number, since I was then recovering from a very serious illness after the death of my second daughter, who only lived five months. I thus

[1] Catherine Petrovna Saltykov, born in 1743, died in 1817; at the time of the above events already the widow of Andrew Petrovitch Chouvalov, the well-known writer.

[2] Stephen Fiodorivitch, Secretary of State and Senator; born 1728, died 1805

saw the princesses only a fortnight later than the other ladies.

I had the honour of being presented to them at the Chepielov Palace,[1] where their apartments were, and which adjoined the Hermitage. I was struck by the grace and charm of Princess Louise, the impression which had been produced upon all those who had already seen her. I grew particularly attached to the Princess, whose youth and gentleness roused in me a very special interest, together with a sort of dread which I could not shake off, knowing as I did the character of the Countess de Chouvalov, my relative, whose immorality and intriguing temper made me foresee danger. The Empress, by placing me, in a manner, in the Princess's circle, seemed to be authorising me to show her attentions that could not appear officious.

I will here transcribe what the Princess Louise, now the Empress Elizabeth, told me herself about her arrival at St. Petersburg.[2]

'We arrived, my sister, Princess Frederica, afterwards Queen of Sweden, and I, between eight and nine o'clock in the evening. At Strelna, the last posting-station before St. Petersburg, we had met with M. de Saltykov,[3] the Chamberlain whom the Empress had appointed to be in attendance on us, and whom she had sent to meet us and congratulate us. The Countess de Chouvalov and M. de Strekalov both took seats in our carriage, and all these preparations for one of the most interesting moments in my life, the full importance of which I already realised, were greatly exciting me when, on entering through the town gate, some one exclaimed: "Here we are in St. Petersburg."

'Spontaneously, under cover of the dark, my sister and I seized hands, and, as we proceeded, each pressed

[1] On the site now occupied by the new Hermitage.

[2] This account has been reproduced exactly, from a note by the Princess herself found in the Imperial Library by the Grand Duke Nicholas Michaelovitch, in the first volume of his work, *L'Impératrice Elisabeth*. St. Petersburg, 1908, p. 19 and after.

[3] Alexander Nikolaïevitch, afterwards Prince; born 1775, died 1837.

that of the other; this silent language expressed what was taking place within us.

'We stopped at the Chepielov Palace, and I ran up a well-lighted staircase, the Countess Chouvalov and M. de Strekalov, neither of them very active, following at some distance behind. M. de Saltykov was with me, but he remained in the ante-room, and I passed through all the rooms without stopping till I arrived in a bedroom, upholstered in crimson damask, where, as I went in, I saw two women and a man, and like a flash reasoned to myself: "I am at St. Petersburg, the Empress's visitor; it is quite natural that she should be there to receive me, so it must be she whom I see," and I went forward to kiss the hand of the one who was most like the idea I had formed in my own mind of the Empress, from the portraits of her that I had seen. A few years later, when I was more versed in the ways of the world, I should certainly have hesitated longer before recognising her.

'She was with Prince Zoubov, at that time simply M. Plato Zoubov,[1] and the Countess Braniçka, niece of Prince Potemkine. The Empress told me she was charmed to make my acquaintance, and I conveyed to her the messages with which my mother had entrusted me. Just at that moment my sister and Countess Chouvalov came in, and after a few more minutes' conversation she retired, and I yielded to the feeling of wizardry that everything I saw roused in me. I have never seen anything that produced this effect to the same extent as the Court of the Empress Catherine, seen for the first time.

'The second day after our arrival was entirely spent in arranging my hair in the Court fashion and in dressing us in Russian clothes, for we were to be presented in the evening to the Grand Duke and Grand Duchess. For the first time in my life I wore paniers, with powdered hair. At six or seven in the evening we were taken to the residence of the Grand Duke, who received us very kindly, while

[1] Born in 1767, and favourite from July 1789, Plato Alexandrovitch Zoubov received only in 1796 the title of Prince. Died in 1802.

the Grand Duchess overwhelmed me with caresses and spoke to me of my mother, of my family, and of how sorry I must have been to leave them. Her manner won my affection altogether, and it is not my fault if this attachment did not grow into a genuine filial affection.

'We sat down, and the Grand Duke sent for the young Grand Dukes and Grand Duchesses. I can see them coming in now. I looked at the Grand Duke Alexander as much as good manners permitted, and thought him very good-looking, but not as handsome as he had been described to me.[1] He did not come up to me, and gave me a very hostile glance. After leaving the Grand Duke and Grand Duchess, we went to see the Empress, who was already seated at her game of boston in the Diamond Room. We were placed at a circular table, Countess Chouvalov, the maids of honour in attendance, and the gentlemen of the bedchamber in attendance being with my sister and me. The two young Grand Dukes arrived soon after us. The Grand Duke Alexander let the evening pass without speaking a word to me and without approaching me, even avoiding me with a look of dislike. But by degrees he grew more civilised with regard to me. Little games at the Hermitage in a very small company, evenings passed together at the round table in the Diamond Room, where we played at secretary or looked at prints, very gradually brought about a softening in his feelings towards me.

'One evening, about six weeks after my arrival, when we were sitting at the round table in the Diamond Room and drawing with the rest of the company, the Grand Duke Alexander slipped in front of me a letter that he had just written, and in which he told me that, *authorised by his parents to tell me that he loved me, he asked me whether I could accept the expression of his affection and return it, and if he might hope that I could find my happiness in marrying him.*

'I replied in the affirmative in the same manner, on a scrap of paper, adding that *I was obeying the wish that my*

[1] Born on 12 December 1777, he was fifteen years old at this time.

parents had expressed in sending me here. After that we were regarded as betrothed, and I was given a Russian master and a teacher of religion.'

The day after the presentation of the Princess Louise to the Grand Duke, the father of her intended bridegroom, the Empress gave audience to the Polish delegates, Counts Braniçki, Rzewuski, and Potoçki, the leaders of the party opposed to a hereditary throne in Poland, who came to ask her Majesty to take their country under her protection.[1] This was the first public ceremony at which Princess Louise was present. The Empress sat on the throne in the hall known as the Throne Room, and the public filled the apartment, the crowd pressing against the door of the guardroom of the Knights. Count Braniçki made a speech in Polish, to which the Vice-Chancellor, Count Ostermann, replied in Russian, standing in front of the throne. When the ceremony was over, the Empress rose and went into her own rooms, Princess Louise following her ; but on turning round the corner of the throne, the Princess's foot got entangled in the gold tassels and fringes of the velvet carpet round it and she stumbled, and would have fallen if M. Plato Zoubov had not supported her.

She was confused and distressed at this accident, the more so as it was her first appearance in public, and some persons were foolish enough to regard it as a bad omen. They did not, like one august personage, have the happy thought of comparing this slight accident with that which Caesar turned so adroitly to account. When he landed in Africa, to follow the remains of the Republican army, he fell as he stepped ashore, and exclaimed, ' Africa, I hold you,' thus twisting to his own advantage what others might have interpreted unfavourably.

I am now approaching the most interesting moment in my life.

[1] These were the authors of the famous confederation of Targowiça, which opposed the salutary measures that had just been voted by the Diet of Warsaw and was destined to prepare the way for the second and third partitions of Poland.

2

A grand and entirely new spectacle was opening out before my eyes in the shape of a majestic and imposing Court and a great sovereign, who was plainly drawing me into closer and closer intimacy with her who was to inspire me with an unalterable attachment. The more I had the honour of seeing Princess Louise, the more absolutely devoted to her I became. In spite of her extreme youth, my interest in her did not escape her notice, as I was happy to observe. At the beginning of May the Court left for Tsarskoie Sielo, and the day after her imperial Majesty instructed my husband to send for me to spend the summer there.

I was delighted to receive this command, and started at once so as to arrive before the Empress's evening. As soon as I was dressed I went up to the castle, to be presented to her. She appeared at six o'clock, addressed me very kindly, and said to me: 'I am very glad to see you in our party. From to-day you are "Madame la grosse Maréchale," [1] which will make you seem more imposing.'

I am now going to give some idea of the persons to whom the Empress accorded permission to reside at Tsarskoie Sielo, and who were admitted to her private circle. But before tracing these various portraits, I should like to describe the sovereign who, for thirty-four years, made Russia a happy land.

Posterity judges, and will judge, Catherine with all human prejudice. The new philosophy, by which she was unfortunately influenced, and which was the mainspring of her failings, covered as with a thick veil her great and fine qualities. But it seems only just to dwell for a moment on the period of her splendid dawn, before condemning her and wiping out the memory of her glory and her unspeakable goodness.

[1] This name was given to me because my husband is a little stout. (Author's note.)

The Empress was brought up at the Court of her father, the Prince of Anhalt, by an ignorant governess of low family, who was hardly capable of teaching her to read,[1] her parents troubling neither about her principles nor her education. She was brought to Russia at the age of seventeen, a beautiful girl with much natural grace and charm, witty, clever, and sensitive, and anxious to please and to learn. She was married to the Duke of Holstein, then Grand Duke, and destined to succeed the Empress Elizabeth, his aunt. He was ugly, weak, undersized, fussy, a drunkard, and a debauchee. Elizabeth's Court was nothing but the scene of a debauch, of which she set the example. A clever man, Count Munnich,[2] was the first to perceive Catherine's ability. He persuaded her to study, and she welcomed the idea enthusiastically. The first book he gave her to read was Bayle's Dictionary—a poisonous, dangerous, and seductive work, especially for one who had no conception of the divine truth which confounds a lie.[3]

Catherine read this work three times in the space of a few months. It enflamed her imagination and afterwards brought her into correspondence with all the Sophists. Such was the mind and temper of the princess who became the wife of an emperor whose sole ambition was to be a corporal in the service of Frederic II. Russia groaned under the yoke of feebleness, and Catherine groaned with Russia, for her grand and noble ideas seemed to rise superior to the obstacles in the way of her elevation. Nature was revolted by the depravities of Peter III and the contempt in which he held his subjects. A general revolution was on the point of breaking out, and a regency was demanded. The Empress having already a son ten years of age—afterwards Paul I—it was decided to send Peter III away

[1] The authoress is unjust to Mlle. Cardel, a Frenchwoman to whom, though it is true she was not clever, Catherine owed more than her ability to read.

[2] Jean Ernest (son of the celebrated field-marshal), born in 1707, died in 1788; afterwards President of the Board of Trade.

[3] I have these particulars from my uncle, M. de Chouvalov, to whom the Empress related them herself.

to Holstein. Prince Orlov and his brother, Count Alexis, who at that time enjoyed the Empress's favours, were commissioned to get him away.[1] Several ships were got ready at Cronstadt, and Peter was to embark with the battalions that he had sent for from Holstein, sleeping at Ropcha, near Oranienbaum, the evening before his departure.

I will not go into the details of the tragic event that ensued, about which only too much has been said, while the main principle directing it has been much misunderstood; but I owe it to the cause of truth to mention here an authentic account which I received from Count Panine, the Minister. His testimony is the more unassailable since it is well known that he was not particularly attached to the Empress. Having been the tutor of Paul I, he had hoped to hold the reins of government himself, under the regency of a woman, and saw his expectations disappointed. The strength with which Catherine grasped the imperial power disappointed his ambitious projects, and he bore her a grudge all his life.

One evening that we were at his house, surrounded by his relatives and friends, he told us a number of interesting anecdotes, and insensibly came to the assassination of Peter III. 'I was in the Empress's cabinet,' he said, 'when Prince Orlov came to announce to her that all was over. She was standing in the middle of the room; the word *over* struck her. "He is gone," she replied at first; then learning the sad truth, she fell into a dead faint. Afterwards she had frightful convulsions, which for a time caused fears for her life. When she recovered, she shed the bitterest tears. "My glory is departed," she repeated; "posterity will never forgive me for this unintended crime!"' The favour in which they were held had stifled in the Orlovs every feeling but that of an unbounded ambition. They had thought that, by killing the Emperor,

[1] It is possible that Catherine may have spoken of this *coup* to Countess Golovine, but only as an invention, after the event. As a matter of fact, there is nothing to point to its having really taken place.

Prince Orlov might step into his place and induce the Empress to crown him.[1]

It is difficult to do justice to the unshaken firmness with which she ruled and cared for her Empire. She was ambitious, but she covered Russia with glory, while her maternal solicitude extended to the humblest individual, and the private interest of each one of her subjects was near to her heart. None could be more imposing than the Empress at times of state. None could be greater, kinder, or more indulgent than she in her private circle. She hardly made her appearance before fear yielded to a tender respect. People seemed to say: 'I see her, I am happy; she is my protector and my mother.'

When she settled down to her game in an evening she would look all round the room to see that everyone had what they required. She carried her attentions so far as to order a blind to be lowered, if the sun were inconveniencing anyone. The players consisted of the General aide-de-camp in attendance, Count Stroganov,[2] and of M. Tchertkov, an old chamberlain,[3] of whom she was very fond. My uncle, M. de Chouvalov, the Lord Chamberlain, took part in the game sometimes, and at any rate was present, as also M. Plato Zoubov. The evening was over at nine o'clock or half-past.

I recollect that Tchertkov, who was a bad player, once lost his temper with the Empress for having made him

[1] Countess Golovine was born four years after the *coup d'état*, and she was only sixteen at the time of Count N. I. Panine's death, so that it is hardly likely she would have remembered his account with very faithful accuracy. The version she gives of the manner in which Catherine received the news of the event at Ropcha is formally contradicted by documents (*Archives Vorontsov*, vol. xxi. p. 430; compare Bilbassov, *loc. cit.* vol. ii. part i. pp. 167–8, and part ii. p. 48). Peter was killed at Ropcha on 5 July 1762, in a quarrel with Prince Theodore Bariatinski, and not without the probable complicity of Alexis Orlov. Catherine certainly did not order the death of her husband, as Alexander, later, certainly did not order the death of his father; but, as in his case, it did not occur to her to punish the murderers.

[2] Alexander Serguiéiévitch.

[3] Evgraf Alexandrovitch, one of Catherine's companions at the time of her accession.

miss a trick. Her Majesty was hurt at the manner in which he flung his cards down on the table, and she put an end to the game, but said nothing. It was then about time to withdraw, so she rose and took leave of us. Tchertkov was dumbfounded. The next day was a Sunday, and ordinarily, on that day, there was a large table set for all the Ministers. The Grand Duke Paul and the Grand Duchess Marie also used to come over from Pavlovsk, the castle they resided in, which was only four versts from Tsarskoie Sielo, but when they did not come there was a small select table in the colonnade, to which I had the honour of being admitted. After mass and the reception, when the Empress had withdrawn, the Court Marshal, Prince Bariatinski, read out the names of the persons who were to have the honour of dining with her. Tchertkov, who had the *entrée* to all the small gatherings, sat in a corner, utterly wretched on account of the scene of the previous evening, and not daring to lift his eyes to the man who was to pronounce his doom. But to his surprise he heard his name called out. He ran, he did not walk. When we entered the colonnade we saw her Imperial Majesty seated at the far end. She rose, came up to Tchertkov, took his arm, and walked all round the colonnade with him. When they returned to their starting-point, she said to him in Russian: 'Are you not ashamed to have thought I should sulk with you? Have you forgotten that between friends quarrels are forgotten?' I never saw a man in such a state as this poor old fellow. He burst into tears, and repeated over and over again: 'O Mother, how can I speak to thee; how can I reply to such goodness? I would like to die for thee all the time!'

The use of *thee* and *thou* is very energetic in Russian, and detracts in nothing from the respectfulness of language.

A round table used to stand near the Empress's during the evenings at Tsarskoie Sielo, and Princess Louise, already betrothed to the Grand Duke, sat between the Princess, her sister, and me. Mlle. de Chouvalov, afterwards Princess

v. Dietrichstein,[1] and the nieces of Countess Protassov[2] completed the princesses' circle.

The Empress had pencils, pens, and paper brought to us, and we used to draw or play at secretary. Her Majesty used sometimes to ask to see the products of our imagination, and would be greatly amused. Countess Chouvalov played some game with Mlle. Protassov and the lords in waiting, and sometimes also with Countess Braniçka, who came occasionally to Tsarskoie Sielo.

This imperial residence was built by the Empress Elizabeth I. It is of vast extent and handsome, despite its Gothic architecture.

The Empress Catherine added to it a suite of private apartments for herself, in better taste. These are situated at the end of a series of several gilded and mirrored saloons opening one out of the other, which separate the Empress's rooms from those formerly occupied by the Grand Duke Paul, and which terminate in a gallery from which the Empress heard Mass with the imperial family and the ladies of her suite. The first of these new apartments is painted in encaustic, and opens into another, the panelling of which is of Siberian lapis lazuli, while the floor is partly of mahogany and partly of mother-of-pearl. The large study which comes next is in Chinese lacquer-work. On the left is a very small but very pretty bedroom, and a little room panelled with mirrors, with panels of fine wood between each one. This little room leads to the colonnade, and from the door you can look down the whole length of it. On the terrace in front there used to be a green morocco divan and a table, and here her Majesty worked in the early morning.

[1] Alexandrine Andreievna, daughter of Andrew Petrovitch; born 1775, married in 1797 to Prince von Dietrichstein, the Austrian Envoy.

[2] Countess Anne Stepanovna Protassov, Catherine's favourite maid of honour; born in 1745, died in 1826; brought up five of the daughters of her brother, Peter Stepanovitch, keeping them with her, in the Winter Palace, until their marriage. Their names were: 1, Alexandrine, afterwards Princess A. Galitzine; 2, Catherine, afterwards Countess Theodore Rastoptchine; 3, Barbara, who did not marry; 4, Vera, afterwards Mme Ilarion Vassiltchikov; 5, Anne, afterwards Countess B. Tolstoy.

These pieces of furniture, which were of the greatest simplicity, were placed in the shelter of a little projecting wall. Beyond it, to the left, was a charming lawn, with borders of beautiful and exquisitely fragrant flowers. Handsome drawing-rooms overlook this end of the terrace, and on the right a granite slope, ornamented with bronze statues copied from the antique originals in the Imperial Academy, leads down to the garden. The colonnade is a glazed gallery with a floor of marble parquet, and is enclosed by a second open gallery, surrounded by columns which support its roof. From here very extensive views may be had; for it overlooks the two gardens—the old formal garden, the ancient limes of which shade the small drawing-rooms on the terrace, and the English garden, with a fine lake in the centre.

This beautiful residence, inhabited by one who possessed every quality that could please or attract, produced a kind of magic effect on the beholder. The Empress had a peculiar gift of elevating and ennobling all with whom she came in contact. She lent wit to all, and the most inept man ceased to be so in her company. One always left her society pleased with oneself, because she knew how to set everyone at ease and to adapt her conversation to the interests and understanding of each.

3

The Empress was extremely fond of her grandson, the Grand Duke Alexander (now Emperor Alexander I). He is handsome and good, but the excellent qualities then noticeable in him, and which might have developed into distinguished virtues, were stunted and checked by his tutor, Count de Saltykov,[1] a crafty and intriguing man, who

[1] Nicholas Ivanovitch, born in 1736, died in 1816; made General-in-Chief in 1773, after brilliant campaigns against the Prussians, the Poles, and the Turks, and Count in 1790; afterwards Minister for War, Field-Marshal, President of the Council of Empire and the Ministerial Committee,

was constantly prescribing to him a course of action that could not fail to pervert the natural frankness of his disposition. Count de Saltykov, wishing to conciliate the favour both of the Empress and of her son, used to involve the Grand Duke in perpetual dissimulation, and though his kind heart sometimes gained the upper hand, the tutor would, if possible, stifle its promptings, and constantly endeavoured to inspire in him a dislike for the Empress and a dread of his father. Hence the young prince's natural instincts were invariably repressed.

The Grand Duke Paul tried to imbue him with his own military tastes, and ordered both him and his brother to attend twice a week at the drills at Pavlovsk, thus instilling into him a painful attention to unnecessary details and a petty idea of the science of tactics, and insensibly crushing all the large conceptions of the art of warfare that were independent of a Prussian uniform or the set of a button.

Still, despite these drawbacks, which would not have been without their marring effect on the strongest individuality, I must do justice to my sovereign: he is as ready to pardon as he is loth to oppress; he has a mild and winning disposition, his conversation has charm and dignity, his style is eloquent, and he is modest to a degree about his kind actions.

Princess Louise, who became his wife, united to an indescribable grace and attractiveness of face and form a self-control and moderation very rare at the age of fourteen, and in all her actions could be traced the result of the training of a loved and respected mother. Her quick understanding caused her to grasp readily all that could embellish her mind, just as a bee draws only honey from the most poisonous plants. Her language had all the freshness of extreme youth, and to this she added great clearness of thought. I never tired either of listening to her or of

and prince in 1814, after having levied, at his own expense, a regiment against Napoleon. A still more adroit courtier than he was a great soldier, he was able to win and keep the confidence of Catherine, of Paul, and of Alexander.

studying her uncommon character, which, though it gave promise of every virtue, made me fear many dangers for her.

The confidence she reposed in me, which grew greater each day, made me realise more and more how well placed my affection for her was, and her popularity, for this reason, became more and more precious to me. The first summer that we passed together was only the introduction to a friendship of many years; I seemed to see in her a young and beautiful plant, the stem of which, tended by a skilful hand, might bear fine shoots, but the growth of which was threatened, too, by storms and rough weather.

I must say a word here about the Grand Duke Constantine. His temper is violent without being dignified, and his every action is tyrannical and indolent. He is bad through weakness, and only punishes when he feels himself the stronger. His intelligence would be pleasing if one could forget his bad heart. And yet he has generous impulses: he is like the hemlock, which is used both as a poison and a remedy.

Countess de Chouvalov, the friend of Voltaire and of d'Alembert,[1] used to excuse her failings by their teaching. She is clever and intriguing, and will sacrifice anything to win favour. M. Plato Zoubov was at that time the idol to whom she burnt incense.

Countess Braniçka, in spite of her adroitness, betrayed herself by her cupidity. Though immensely wealthy, she complains of poverty.[2]

M. Plato Zoubov has a fairly well cultivated mind, a good memory, and a talent for music. His languid face bears the impress of the nonchalance of his character.

[1] Through her husband, Count Andrew Petrovitch (1744–89), himself a poet. 'Countess Chouvalov breathes only vice,' wrote Rastoptchine to S. R. Vorontsov, 20 August 1795. (*Archives Vorontsov*, vol. viii. p. 105.)

[2] 'Madame Braniçka is here with her children, lodged at the Court and with all her expenses paid, and alleging great affliction and poverty.' (The same to the same, St. Petersburg, 13 February; *loc. cit.*, vol. viii. p. 50.)

Count de Stroganov was a very amiable man, kind to weakness, and passionately fond of the arts, and was all enthusiasms and sudden impulses, and did wrong under the influence of others, but never by his own volition. His constant good-humour and gaiety were a great addition to the circle. The Emperor Paul made him Director of the Academy of Arts, but he hated its perfection. He loved his country, but possessed none of the virtues that might have fitted him to help her.

My uncle, the Lord Chamberlain, M. de Chouvalov, was goodness personified. His beautiful and noble countenance reflected his generous and disinterested heart. Half his income he gave to the poor. His devotion to the Empress was such that it almost amounted to a weakness. He always felt timid in her presence, in spite of all the kindnesses she heaped upon him. One day when she was playing billiards with the members of her immediate circle, he happened to come in. Her Majesty, in jest, made him a deep curtsey, to which he responded. She smiled, and the courtiers burst out laughing. The sudden and affected outburst attracted the Empress's attention. 'Gentlemen,' said she, 'the Lord Chamberlain and I have been friends for forty years, and I am entitled to joke with him.' Everyone was promptly silent. My uncle pined in grief for a year after the death of his sovereign.[1]

M. de Tchertkov was a good and excellent Russian in every meaning of the word, and united dignity to much natural wit. The Empress was the object of his adoration, and he died a few months after her, being unable to bear her loss.

Mlle. de Protassov, who was as dark and ugly as the Queen of Tahiti, always resided at the Court. She was related to Prince Orlov, who had used his influence to get her placed there. Having arrived at a more than reasonable age without finding a husband, her Majesty presented her with her portrait with the title of 'Maid in waiting.' She

[1] He only survived her one year, dying on 14 November 1797.

belonged to the Empress's private circle of intimates, not because she was her friend, nor because she had earned the distinction by her merits, but because she was poor and sulky, and, at heart, a grateful creature. The Empress, who pitied her inefficiency, tried to help her by her protection, gave her permission to send for her nieces, and assisted in their education. Sometimes she teased her about her ill-humour. One day, when she was worse than usual, her Majesty said to her: 'My Queen' (this was the term of address she used to her when she was jesting), 'I am sure that you have beaten your maid this morning, and that that is why you are looking so sulky. Now I, who got up at five o'clock in the morning, and have been deciding matters that will please some and displease others, have left all my worries behind in my study, and arrive here, my fair Queen, in the best temper in the world!'

The Court of the Grand Duke Alexander was composed of the Grand Marshal, Count de Golovine, my husband; of Count Tolstoy [1] and of M. Adadourov,[2] Chamberlains; of Prince Khovanski [3] and of Count Potoçki,[4] gentlemen in waiting. We finished the evening in the rooms of Princess Louise, who, since her betrothal and her abjuration, had received the title of Grand Duchess Elizabeth. The nieces of Mlle. Protassov always came too. Princess Frederica contributed not a little to the pleasure of the company. She was full of wit and ingenuity, and, in spite of her youth, even then revealed a very determined character. Alas! her destiny, though brilliant, exposed her to great trials, and the crown placed on her head was woven with many thorns.[5]

[1] Nicholas Alexandrovitch, then Chamberlain, and later on Marshal and Acting Councillor; born in 1761, died in 1816.

[2] Alexis, nephew, it appears, of Vassili Evdokimovitch, an old tutor of Catherine II.

[3] Andrew, a non-commissioned officer in the Guards.

[4] Felix, Major-General.

[5] It is well known that the husband of Princess Frederica, Gustavus Adolphus IV, having rendered himself obnoxious to his subjects by the

She left, at the end of our stay at Tsarskoie Sielo, to return to the Princess, her mother, and the separation between the two sisters was very touching. The day before, on my way to the Grand Duchess Elizabeth's rooms, I had met the Empress under the arches of the terrace, coming away from Princess Frederica, to whom she had just been paying her farewell visit.

The next morning, when all was ready, the Court of the Grand Duke Alexander assembled, and crossed a part of the gardens and the beautiful lawn, as far as the gate, where the carriage was waiting. After heartrending farewells, the Grand Duchess jumped into her sister's carriage, the door of which was just being closed, and after having kissed her again, got out hastily, took my hand, and started to run with me as far as a ruin at the end of the garden, where she sat down under a tree, put her head on my shoulder, and gave way to all her grief.

Countess Chouvalov having joined us, with the remainder of the Court, the Grand Duchess rose, swallowed her tears, and walked slowly and with dignity to the house. Such control had she over her feelings, young though she was, and this uncommon strength of hers deceived all those who did not know her well, as to her real character. They thought her cold and unfeeling, but when people mentioned this to me I did not reply. Some things are so sacred and so noble that to speak of them seems desecration, while some persons pass judgments so vile and contemptible that they do not deserve to be honoured by refutation.

failure of his external policy (the loss of Pomerania in 1807 and of Finland the following year), and by the mistakes of his internal government (oppressive laws, onerous taxes, and annoyances of all sorts), was surprised by a military conjuration and shut up in the Castle of Gripsholm (13 March 1809). He was forced to abdicate, and settled in Switzerland under the name of Colonel Gustafson. Frederica Dorothea divorced him in 1812, and died in 1826 at Lausanne.

4

Preparations for the marriage of the Grand Duke Alexander began at once after our return to town. Everyone was looking forward eagerly to the event, which took place on 29 September 1793, in the Chapel at the Winter Palace. A raised platform, on which the ceremony was to take place, had been erected where it might be seen by everyone; and when the two beautiful children—for they were little more—appeared in their places, general enthusiasm broke out. The Lord Chamberlain, M. de Chouvalov, and Prince Bezborodko held the crowns. When the ceremony was over, the Grand Duke and the Grand Duchess came down from the platform holding hands, and the Grand Duke fell on one knee before the Empress to thank her. She raised him, took him in her arms and kissed him, sobbing, then turned to the Grand Duchess, who received the same demonstrations of affection. They then embraced the Grand Duke and Grand Duchess, their parents, who also thanked the Empress. The Grand Duke Paul was greatly overcome, which was noticed by everybody. At that time he loved his daughter-in-law as if she were his own child; and Count Rastoptchine, who for a long time enjoyed his confidence, told me that one day at Gatchina, when the Grand Duchess was mentioned, he eagerly declared, 'You will go far to find a second Elizabeth.'

But everything changed, and unfortunate circumstances arose that lent an appearance of truth to the vilest calumnies. Such is the lot of princes. Obstacles are laid in the way of their most legitimate and most natural feelings by base and unscrupulous men—flatterers who are eager to make their own position secure at the expense of trusty and faithful adherents.

The Grand Duke Paul was more easily deceived than many, for his character, which grew more and more suspicious, gave every opening to those who wished to ruin him. The

Grand Duchess, his wife, although she was extremely fond of her husband, was anxious to rule him but only succeeded in embittering him, and surrounded him with intriguers who, by ceaselessly flattering his ambition, warped the natural generosity of his disposition. She thought that helping the poor and unfortunate was a sufficient fulfilment of all the obligations of charity, and the pride that was her bane at last poisoned even her acts of beneficence, that had originally been the outcome of a tender heart. She grew jealous of the beauty and grace of her daughter-in-law, the Grand Duchess Elizabeth, of the Empress's friendship for her, and especially of her popularity. I can really only attribute the change in her feelings towards me to my special devotion to her daughter-in-law, for the kindness with which she honoured me for sixteen years changed later to hatred, and she tried to ruin me in the estimation of the Grand Duchess Elizabeth, knowing well that nothing could hurt me more.

On the day of the wedding there was a dinner, and in the evening a full-dress ball in the Grand Duke Alexander's great hall. The Empress, the Grand Duke Paul, and the Grand Duchess Marie conducted the bride and bridegroom to their apartments. The next day there was another ball in the Empress's Grand Gallery, and various other entertainments followed. The arrival of the Turkish Ambassador, too, furnished a brilliant spectacle in October of the same year. The audience that the Empress granted him was very impressive ; from the door of the room in which he was received, to the throne on which the Empress was seated, a double line of the Royal Guards was drawn up, enormous men in red cloaks, with a gold sun and the Russian eagle on their breasts, and another on their backs, fastened by large chains, which crossed each other, and with silver helmets and carbines and black nodding plumes. The Empress wore her imperial mantle and her small crown. Two masters of ceremony, carrying their official wands of gold, surmounted with the eagle, headed the procession, and two others, immediately after the richly dressed Ambassador,

brought up over fifty Turks, bearing presents on cushions of Turkish cloth of gold.

Just about this time, as the Court was ready to leave Tsarskoie Sielo for the Taurida Palace, where part of the spring and autumn was always spent, an incident occurred that gave me great pleasure, for my mother-in-law asked the Empress's permission to come and thank her on her son's behalf. She was too old and too deaf to have been ceremoniously presented at the Winter Palace when he was appointed Court-Marshal to the Grand Duke Alexander, but her Majesty was good enough to grant her the favour of a private reception, and commanded me to bring her one afternoon. We arrived in the drawing-room a few moments before the Empress entered. My mother-in-law was a woman of much intelligence and great merit, who always justly enjoyed a spotless reputation, and who had given proofs of great courage and constancy during the exile and misfortunes of her family and her own imprisonment in the reign of the Empress Elizabeth.[1] She had ceased going into society for some time, on account of her infirmity, but as soon as she entered the room there was a general cry of delight, and people hastened to kiss her hands and show her every mark of respect. I confess that I was proud and touched at the homage paid to her.

The Empress received her with the greatest kindness, kissed her and commanded me to be her spokeswoman, so that she might not embarrass her by shouting in her ear. I gratefully repeated to her all our sovereign's kind remarks, and the Empress then took us into her own apartments, to show them to my mother-in-law, who took advantage of the absence of spectators to seize her Majesty's hands and express to her in the most touching language how

[1] 'A good soul, fifty years of age, deaf and sickly, with no perception of the humour of her position and of the fact that she is a spoil-sport,' wrote the Chevalier de Corberon in 1776 (*Journal intime*, i. 297). She was the daughter of Admiral Stephen Vassilievitch Lapoukhine, accused in 1743, with his wife, the beautiful Nathalie, of whom the Empress Elizabeth was very jealous, of high treason, and exiled, with all his family, to Siberia. (See Waliszewski, *La Dernière des Romanov*, p. 318 and after.)

grateful she felt to her for having thought of her son and of her in her old age. The Empress was quite overcome, and I, too, was extremely touched. When we returned to the drawing-room my mother-in-law wished to take her leave, but her Majesty made her stay for the evening, told her to make up a game of boston with the partners she preferred, and greatly enjoyed the gaiety that this kind and worthy old lady spread around her.

5

On 9 May we left for Tsarskoie Sielo. The Empress's departure, although it took place every spring, was always a very striking and impressive affair. She started with her private attendants in a carriage with seats for six, drawn by ten exceptionally fine horses, her carriage being preceded by six men in livery, twelve Hussars, and twelve Cossacks of the Guards, and followed by the Pages of the Bedchamber and the equerries on horseback. As she set out, a salute of a hundred guns was fired from the fortress, to announce her departure to the town. The people ran, and every carriage tore up in eagerness to see her pass, and, when she was gone, everything seemed flat and dull. She left an unimaginable void behind, and, unreasonable though it seemed, I, too, though I was to join her the next day, shared the general feeling of depression and was eager to be gone.

I am sorry that this sovereign pomp has been done away with. The eyes and the imagination need to be struck by outward signs and symbols of greatness in keeping with the respect that one feels in one's heart for the sovereign. I also regret the guns which used to be fired at sunrise and sunset, reminding one of the end of all things, and then again of the new hopes that are our constant portion and experience.[1]

[1] It was Paul I who did away with this custom. (Author's note.)

CHAPTER III

1794—1795

1. Second visit to Tsarskoie Sielo—New faces—Delights and dangers of the spring—'Cupid and Psyche'—An august friendship—A fresh acquaintance—Countess Tolstoy. 2. Country pleasures and amorous fancies—The game of prisoners' base—The Grand Duchess Elizabeth and Plato Zoubov—A concert—'The Court complaint.' 3. Great events—The partition of Poland—A Polish deputation at St. Petersburg—At the Taurida Palace—A declaration in a song. 4. Illness of the Grand Duke Alexander—Pleasant evenings—The Prince of Saxony—Cabals and intrigues—About the Empress Catherine. 5. First disgrace—The Grand Duchess Marie Feodorovna—Peterhof—War against revolutionary France—Cronstadt. 6. The fragments of Poland—The Comte de Choiseul-Gouffier—Rastoptchine—The Grand Duchess Elizabeth's diary.

I

THE summer of 1794, the second that I spent at Tsarskoie Sielo, brought some fresh personages on the scene. One was Count d'Esterhazy, the agent of the French princes, who was at first very well treated by the Empress.[1] His churlish manner disguised an intriguing and selfish character, and people thought him frank and straightforward, but the Empress was not deceived long, and only continued to tolerate him from kindness. He perceived this, and entered the service of Zoubov, who maintained him. His wife was a kind soul, grateful to her old masters, easy to get on with, and always the same.

[1] She gave him the estate of Grodek in Volhynia, which was inherited by his son Ladislaus, who settled in Russia. (Author's note.)

Count Stackelberg,[1] formerly our Ambassador to Warsaw, where he played an interesting part, possessed the social gift to perfection. He was a clever courtier and devoted to Zoubov.

Count Theodore Golovkine, although an unimportant personage, occupied a position of some prominence for a time. An impudent liar and a bold and mischievous man, by dint of jest and amusing repartee he gained some footing with the Empress, but he did not remain in favour long. Irony and scandal were taboo to the Empress, who abominated both. Count Golovkine became reader and gentleman valet to Zoubov, the intimate friend and confidant of Countess Chouvalov. M. Zoubov obtained for him the post of Minister at Naples, but he had to be recalled for bad behaviour, and was even exiled for a time.

Three sisters, the Princesses de Galitzine, were appointed maids of honour to the Grand Duchess Elizabeth shortly before her marriage. They followed the Court to Tsarskoie Sielo.

The outdoor appearance of things was so gay that it added an indescribable charm to the mildness of the spring. This is the season when the feelings hold full sway ; memories throng in upon one, the heart is more susceptible than at other times, we love better where we ought to love, and are ready to love more still. But, with it all, we are prone to a certain restlessness that is not without its dangers for a heart whose cravings are unsatisfied.

The Grand Duchess Elizabeth had grown in height and loveliness, and attracted universal attention. Her angelic face, her slight and elegant figure, and her graceful movements were a constant surprise, and when she came into the Empress's rooms, all eyes were turned upon her. I enjoyed her triumph, but felt a secret dread. I should have liked the eyes of the Grand Duke to be upon her more often than on others.

[1] Otto Magnus, of Courlandic origin ; born in 1736, died in 1800. He was Ambassador to Warsaw, where he prepared the second partition of Poland.

We went for a walk every evening, the fine weather tempting us to linger in the fresh air, but the Empress remained on the slope or in the Colonnade. The sunset, the mildness of the air, and the perfume of the flowers soothed and pleased the senses. What a wonderful time youth is ! But, alas ! how much of its honey changes into poison !

Nothing could be more pleasing and delightful than the relations between the Grand Duke Alexander and the Grand Duchess Elizabeth. They were like Cupid and Psyche, and there was perfect harmony in their affection for those around them. The Grand Duke at that time honoured me with marked friendship, and I always made a third in their morning walk. Both of them wanted me, and if there were any little disagreement between them, it was I who was called in as arbiter. I remember that after one of their tiffs, they ordered me to be in my uncle's apartments on the ground floor of the palace, which opened on the formal garden, at seven o'clock in the morning. I was there at the appointed time, and they both appeared on the terrace, and the Grand Duke came in through the window, lifted out a chair, went out again, and then made me climb out, all to give an air of adventure to the simplest thing in the world. They then took me by the arm to an old hermitage at the bottom of the garden, made me sit on a table, and the case began, both speaking at once. Judgment was pronounced in favour of the Grand Duchess, who was absolutely in the right, and the Grand Duke had to apologise, which he did. When this weighty business was settled we went on with our walk in the best of spirits.

We made several delightful excursions that summer, for the Empress's one desire was to see her grandchildren happy and contented. She allowed the Grand Duke and Grand Duchess to go out whenever and wherever they liked, even in the afternoons. One day a hunt was arranged at Krasnoie Sielo, an Imperial country seat very near to the Douderhof Mountains, a group of three hills, two of which are densely wooded. Lovely flowers grow on these hills, which are a regular paradise for botanists. The centre one is the

least wooded, but a Finnish village which has been built on the top, with a Lutheran church, like a hermitage in appearance, made it quite picturesque.[1]

When we arrived at the palace it was hot and close, and thunder threatened. We dined without interruption, but no sooner had we risen from the table than we heard a terrific crash of thunder; the most gorgeous flashes of lightning blinded our eyes. The rain poured down in a sheet, hail with it. The Grand Duchess ran and picked up the hailstones that rolled down the chimney into the room. All the bustle, the anxiety of the sportsmen, and the general commotion much amused the Grand Duchess and me. Princess Galitzine, one of the maids of honour, who was mortally terrified at thunder, fled into the bedroom, and young Countess Chouvalov went with her, while the mother of the latter kept going backwards and forwards. The Grand Duchess and I sat at the window and were thoroughly enjoying the storm, which was most impressive to watch. We were both wearing riding habits, and black beaver caps, but the Grand Duchess's cap had a steel twist round it. This she took off and put round mine, that we might make an exchange without its being noticed; then she took my cap and gave me hers, all without a word being spoken. The same day she gave me a little paper that she had written for me, and that I have still, with her portrait and her hair in a locket.

Nothing is sweeter than a first friendship, and no obstacle should be put in its way. The trust, the frankness, and innocence of youth are like a bed of flowers in which fresh blooms are constantly springing up. You love without fear and without remorse. How happy, how more than happy, it is to be the object of so true and tender an affection.[2]

[1] Krasnoie Sielo, is fifteen versts (nearly ten miles) from Tsarskoie Sielo. It has a wooden palace, built by Elizabeth I.

[2] About this time the Grand Duchess wrote to her mother: 'If there is anyone whom I like, as I do certain ladies, especially a Countess Golovine, I dare not show it, for the people here are unbearable.' (Grand Duke Nicholas Mikhaïlovitch, *Impératrice Elisabeth*, vol. i. p. 138.)

The storm gave over and was followed by a perfect afternoon. The air was mild and fragrant, and everything contributed to make our walk enjoyable. There was hunting for a time, and afterwards we climbed the first hill, from the top of which we had beautiful views. The flowers and the strawberries seemed to be growing under our feet. Afterwards we started up the most densely wooded hill, and halfway up we came to a pheasantry, enclosed by very bushy trees, and near it perceived a road leading up to the top. The Grand Duchess wanted to go on up, but the path was too steep and stony, so someone made quite a novel suggestion. Near the pheasantry we had seen an old Finnish cart, with a horse between the shafts, which conveyance was proposed to the Grand Duchess, and gleefully accepted. She and I, Princess Galitzine, and young Countess Chouvalov got in, and the chamberlains and the gentlemen in waiting assisted the horse, some pulling it along by the bridle, others pushing the cart from behind. The Grand Duke and some of the gentlemen were on horseback.

We had a long day and drove back in open carriages. It was a superb evening and the whole country looked quite different. The daylight had given place to a dim twilight, in which every object—the hills, the trees and steeples—stood out black against a clear greyish sky. We did not talk much, but each one enjoyed it in his or her own way.

Countess Tolstoy, wife of the Grand Duke's chamberlain,[1] lived at Tsarskoie Sielo. She had not as yet the *entrée* to the Empress, but she was allowed to visit the Grand Duchess, as belonging to her Court. I had known her from her childhood, but not intimately, and she is related to me through my husband. Her husband professed a great adoration for me at that time, and brought her to me, saying : ' I make you a present of my wife.'

She was justly hurt at these words, which embarrassed

[1] Anne Ivanovna Bariatinski, daughter of Prince Ivan Serguiéiévitch and of Princess Catherine of Holstein-Beck ; died in 1825 in Paris, where she was buried. She was called ' La Longue,' on account of her height.

me, and placed a kind of barrier between us, but fortunately it was soon broken down. She is beautiful and good, but trials and misfortunes had had the effect of increasing her excessive natural timidity, and when we were alone she never spoke. At last, however, by dint of tact and attentions, I succeeded in familiarising her with me and winning her confidence, and also in making her love me with all her heart. Our association developed into a real affection, and the trials through which we have both passed have only strengthened a friendship which must not and cannot cool.

We used to drive and walk together in the mornings in the neighbourhood of Tsarskoie Sielo, and one day she persuaded me to go and see a colonists' village situated at about a dozen versts from the castle.[1] We thought it a most charming place and told the Grand Duke and Duchess all about our visit, which made their Imperial Highnesses think that they would like to see it too. They readily obtained the Empress's permission to do so, and it was decided that they should go incognito, under our wing, so as to feel themselves more at liberty. The Grand Duchess was to pass as Mlle. Herbst, her own maid, and the Grand Duke as my nephew. The Grand Duchess and I and Countess Tolstoy started at eight o'clock in the morning in a little postchaise belonging to the Countess. My husband drove the Grand Duke in a little English trap of his own. When we arrived at Mme. Wildbad's—the house where we put up—the Grand Duchess was struck by the resemblance of the house and the costumes to those of the peasants of her native country. The Wildbad family consisted of the husband, the wife, a son and his wife and little child, and one young girl. Two neighbours were sent for, and they all played Rhine waltzes, but the music and the house together roused memories of home in the Grand Duchess, which rather clouded her enjoyment, so my husband went up to her, and to distract her attention, said :

[1] Eight miles.

'Mademoiselle Herbst, you are lazy, it is time to get breakfast ready; let us go into the kitchen and you shall chop this parsley for the omelette that we are going to make.' This farce restored our good spirits, and the Grand Duchess had her first cooking lesson. She was wearing a white morning dress, with a little straw hat on her fair hair. Later on they brought us a quantity of roses and we made a wreath for her hat. She was literally as beautiful as an angel. As for the Grand Duke Alexander, he could hardly keep a straight face seeing my husband swaggering about with his hat on and giving himself such airs.

We had an excellent omelette, and butter and very thick cream added the finishing touches to the breakfast. In a corner of the room there was a bassinette, with a baby asleep in it, and the young mother went up to it from time to time to set it rocking. The Grand Duchess noticed this, and kneeling down, picked up the child in her arms, her eyes full of tears. She seemed to have a presentiment of the painful sacrifices that the future would require of her.

This mixture of simplicity, gaiety, and sentiment made our morning quite interesting, and our return was no less lively, for a warm, heavy rain poured down in torrents, so we took the Grand Duke into the carriage with us, under the rug that covered our knees. The carriage would not hold more than three, and in spite of our care he was wet to the skin, but that did not take from our mirth, and for a long time we looked back with pleasure on this expedition.[1]

Mme. Wildbad, who sometimes came into the town on business, used to bring me butter, and I asked her one day to take some to my supposed nephew. 'I do not know where he lives,' she said, so I replied that I would send someone to show her, and told one of my footmen to take her to the palace, but her surprise and delight on learning the truth almost made her ill. The Grand Duke gave her a hundred roubles and a coat for her husband. I think the little pension was continued for several years.

[1] The Grand Duchess refers to it with delight in a letter to her mother. (Grand Duke Nicholas M., *Impératrice Elisabeth*, vol. i. p. 209.)

2

Our pleasures were growing more in number all the time, for the Empress was doing all she could to render Tsarskoie Sielo even more attractive. Someone suggested that we should play prisoners' base on the lawn in front of the castle, to which she gave her assent, so we formed two sides: Alexander's and Constantine's. A pink flag and a blue flag with monograms embroidered in silver distinguished them, and, as a matter of course, I was on Alexander's side. The Empress and those who were not playing sat on a bench near the path which bordered the lawn. The Grand Duchess Elizabeth used to hang her hat on the flag before beginning to run; and she skimmed the ground, so light was she, the breeze playing in her pretty hair. She far surpassed all the other women, but everyone admired her and never tired of watching her.

These games were a pleasure to everyone, and we all liked taking part in them. The Empress, who was kindness itself, noticed that her chamberlains and lords in waiting, who were in attendance twice a week, regretted having to leave when their attendance was over, so she gave them permission to remain at Tsarskoie Sielo as long as they wished. Not one of them left all through the summer.

M. Zoubov used to play, and the grace and beauty of the Grand Duchess Elizabeth did not fail to impress him. One evening, while the games were proceeding, the Grand Duke Alexander came up to me, took my hand and the Grand Duchess's, and said: 'Zoubov is in love with my wife.' These words, uttered in her hearing, gave me a terrible shock, but I combated the idea as impossible, adding that if M. Zoubov were capable of such madness, the best thing to do was to despise him, and take no notice. But the mischief was done, and the unfortunate words had already made the Grand Duchess feel conscious and disturbed. She was disconcerted and I was unhappy and uneasy. Nothing is more useless and more dangerous

than to call the attention of a young wife to an admiration that must necessarily offend her, which her purity and innate dignity have not allowed her to perceive, but which will henceforward cause her a sort of embarrassment that can be misinterpreted to her disadvantage.

I had supper with their Imperial Highnesses as usual, after the games, but the Grand Duke's discovery kept running horribly in my head. The next day we were to dine at the Grand Duke Constantine's, at his house at Sophia,[1] and I had gone to the Grand Duchess's rooms to accompany her. 'Let us walk on quickly, in front of the others,' said she; 'I have something to tell you. I obeyed; she gave me her arm, and, when we were far enough away not to be overheard, 'This morning,' she said, 'M. de Rastoptchine came to see the Grand Duke, and confirmed what he noticed yesterday about Zoubov. He repeated the conversation to me with so much heat and uneasiness that I almost fainted. I am exceedingly upset; I do not know what to do. Zoubov's presence will make me feel constrained, I am sure.'

'For Heaven's sake, calm yourself,' I replied. 'It all only merits your contempt, and you need feel neither embarrassment nor concern. Be brave enough to forget all that has been said, and it will die out of itself.'

She grew a little calmer and the dinner passed off fairly well. In the evening we went up to the Empress's rooms. I noticed that M. Zoubov was dreamy, and kept casting languishing looks at me, which he afterwards turned upon the Grand Duchess. Soon all Tsarskoie Sielo was in the secret of this unfortunate folly and at once two parties took sides against me: the confidants and the spies. The Countess de Chouvalov was the prime depository of Zoubov's feelings, and Count Golovkine, Count Stackelberg, Koltychov (Chamberlain, and afterwards Marshal of the Court), the Princesses Galitzine (maids of honour), and Beck, the

[1] A little town built outside the garden of Tsarskoie Sielo. (Author's note.)

doctor, were set to watch me. Day by day they reported their observations to Count Saltykov. Our walks, our conversations with the Grand Duchess, and her slightest attentions to me were noted and embroidered, commented upon, and the report of them carried by Saltykov to the Grand Duchess Marie. I found myself surrounded by a legion of enemies, but I was fortified by my conscience and so devoted to the Grand Duchess Elizabeth that instead of being uneasy, I redoubled my zeal, and, in a manner of speaking, my boldness. The protection of the Empress, her kindness to me, and the confidence the Grand Duke felt in me prevented my feeling at all embarrassed.

These circumstances only strengthened the Grand Duchess's friendship for me, and we hardly left each other. She confided in me absolutely without reserve, while I became so devotedly attached to her that my happiness centred in hers.

Zoubov's attentions to me were more pointed than ever and disgusted me more and more; while his whisperings and private understandings with Countess Chouvalov made me despise them both. Among Zoubov's other confidants was an Italian guitar player, named Santi, whom I knew, for he used to come to my house to play. He was set to watch my walks in the garden with the Grand Duchess and to tell his love-sick patron which direction we had taken, so that he could come to meet us, and sometimes the ruse was successful. M. Zoubov would accost us with a deep bow and raise his great black eyes in a hesitating and languishing manner that made me laugh. And as soon as he had left us, I would give way to my merriment, and compare him to a magic lantern, doing my utmost to make him look ridiculous in the Grand Duchess's eyes.

One day, when I was walking alone in the garden, I met Count Stackelberg, who greeted me with the eagerness and in the pleasant tone which he always adopted to those whom he pretended to like.

'My kind friend, my dear Countess,' he said, 'the oftener I see our adorable Psyche, the more I lose my head

over her. She is incomparable! But I see one fault in her.'

'And what is that, if you please?'

'Ah! she has too hard a heart, and makes too many unhappy. She does not appreciate the tenderest homage, the most respectful attentions.'

'And whose, pray?'

'Those of the man who adores her!'

'You are mad, my dear Count, and you do not know me if you think I will listen to you. Go to Mme. de Chouvalov, who will understand you better, and know once and for all that weakness is as foreign to Psyche as your words are vile and despicable.'

As I finished speaking I happened to glance in the direction of Zoubov's apartments, and I saw him on his balcony. I took Stackelberg by the arm, and led him up to him.

'Here, sir,' I said, 'is a poor young man who has gone mad; have him bled at once. In the meantime I give him permission to repeat every word of our conversation.'

I admit that I left them very pleased with myself.

This, though a stormy time, was a very happy one. All that surrounded us seemed so completely in harmony with the pleasing illusions of youth. The imposing Court, the castle, the gardens, the terraces perfumed with flowers, awoke chivalrous fancies and fired the imagination. As she was returning from a walk one lovely evening, the Empress stopped on the slope, and we all sat down on the granite flagstones. Her Majesty placed me between herself and the Grand Duchess, from whom Zoubov never took his eyes. The Grand Duchess was uncomfortable under his gaze, and this made me have very great difficulty in keeping my thoughts under control, and in understanding what the Empress did me the honour of saying to me. Suddenly we heard strains of exquisite music. A distinguished musician named Dietz,[1] was playing on the viol, accompanied by a viola and a violoncello. The orchestra

[1] Henri Dietz; he gave lessons to the Grand Duke Alexander.

was under Zoubov's windows, not far from where we were, and the harmonious notes of this lover's instrument floated long drawn out through the evening air, the calm of the atmosphere preventing them dying away too quickly. The Grand Duchess was quite overcome, but friendship understands without words, and I knew instinctively what was passing in her mind as her embarrassment yielded to the enjoyment of the moment.

When the Empress had retired I accompanied the Grand Duchess to her room, and we sat down on a window-seat in the little drawing-room, the rest of the company remaining in the large drawing-room adjoining. Our window was open and looked out into the garden, where the pretty lake reflected the moon; everything was calm and quiet, except the young heart so greedy of impressions.

The Grand Duke had the feelings of a brother for his wife, but she wanted from him the love she would have given him, had he been able to understand her, and a disappointment to the affections is a painful thing, especially in the early days. The principles that had been instilled into the Grand Duchess's mind from her earliest childhood by the Princess, her mother, all inclined her to virtue and the fulfilment of her duty. She knew and she felt that her husband ought to be the principal object of her affections, and she was prepared to give him her whole heart, but as he did not respond, friendship became more and more necessary to her. I was always there, ready to value and appreciate every kindness, and obstacles, intrigues, and illusions only added zest to her affection for me. I should have been afraid to check it, for she needed some outlet for her feelings, and to preserve her white purity of soul, I let her pour out her heart to me. My devotion to her was my own safeguard, for I knew that friendship is of different ages; its first days are hot and fiery like youth, but it grows calmer with experience, and trials cement its bonds.

One evening, instead of accompanying the Grand Duchess, after the Empress's evening, I went into my uncle's apartments for a moment, to change something in my

dress ; I was not long, and I was proceeding to my duties when I met someone who told me that M. Zoubov was giving a serenade at his window, and that the officious Mme. de Chouvalov was going to take the Grand Duchess to walk on the lawn, thus making her presence appear to express approval of M. Zoubov's sentiments. I was furious and began to run as fast as I could, very fortunately overtaking the Grand Duchess before she reached the appointed spot. She was holding Mme. de Chouvalov's arm.

' Where are you going, madame ? ' I asked.

' On the lawn,' she replied ; ' the Countess has just told me we are going to hear some very delightful music.'

I gave her a meaning look and added :

' Believe me, madame, we had better go for a walk this beautiful weather.' The Grand Duchess loosed the arm of her worthy guide and we walked off at too rapid a pace for her to follow. As we went along I gave the Grand Duchess the true version of the incident, and she was very grateful to me. The next morning Countess Chouvalov complained of me to all her confidants, but I laughed, for I think it is quite as fine a thing to merit the hatred of those we despise as it is flattering to deserve the esteem of those we love. I know nothing of intrigue ; I am not calculating enough, nor clever enough, I cannot flatter at the expense of my conscience, and *I do not understand the policy of society.*

One afternoon M. de Kalytchov came to ask me, in M. Zoubov's name, to sing a song when the Empress made her appearance for the evening. The song was quite a new one. I read it through and noticed that the second couplet was a declaration, the purport of which was by no means obscure. I thanked M. de Kalytchov and asked him to tell M. Zoubov that I did not wish to force myself on the Empress's notice, nor to abuse her kindness, for she did not like music. He went away as he had come, and I did not mention the matter to the Grand Duchess.

The next day was Sunday. There was a small ball among the usual company. As I was dancing an anglaise

with M. de Kalytchov, I saw a roll of music protruding from his pocket, and this he drew out from time to time, so that the Grand Duchess, who was near me, might see it. Not being able to get her to ask for it, he decided to suggest that she should look at it, but I had anticipated him by whispering to the Grand Duchess :

' Do not take the music ; you shall know what it is this evening.'

She did not take it.

I have forgotten to mention Princess Michael Galitzine,[1] the eldest daughter of Countess Chouvalov, who had obtained permission to come to Tsarskoie Sielo on Sundays. She is a restless woman with a character full of inconsistencies, and was excessively jealous of the Empress's kindness to me. Between Mass and dinner her Majesty held a reception.[2] Princess Michael, knowing that she amused herself sometimes by making impressions from the antique, was passionately desirous of having one for a locket that she used to wear in a very conspicuous manner so that it could be seen that it was empty. The Empress noticed it and said to her :

' It seems to me, Princess, that the locket I have seen you wearing for some Sundays requires something.'

The Princess blushed with pleasure, and replied that she should be very happy if it might deserve some of the Empress's work.

' No, madame, I will give you a Siberian stone much more beautiful than my impressions.'

A week later, she sent Countess Chouvalov a locket of Siberian chalcedony encircled with diamonds, to give to her daughter. The Princess appeared at Mass, radiant,

[1] Prascovia Andrelevna, born 1767, died in 1828, married to Prince Michael Andrelevitch Galitzine. Her grace and beauty were renowned.

[2] A letter from the Grand Duke Alexander to Count Victor Kotchoubey, dated 15 November 1795, and found among the papers of the Grand Duchess, afterwards the Empress Elizabeth, confirms Countess Golovine's suggestions as to Zoubov's guilty passion, and the encouragement that Countess Chouvalov and Count Golovkine gave him. (The Grand Duke Nicholas, *L'Impératrice Elisabeth*, vol. i. p. 46.)

showing her Majesty's gift to everybody, and seeming almost beside herself with pleasure. In the evening, at the dance, she was so excited that her feet barely seemed to touch the ground. The Empress watched me all day, and treated me coldly, but I was not disturbed in the least, and danced as gaily as usual. My angelic Grand Duchess occupied my thoughts entirely, for I was by no means affected with the Court complaint. Her Majesty noticed this, and at the end of the evening called me to her :

' Your gaiety quite delights me,' she said ; ' nothing seems to affect it.'

' Why, madame,' said I, ' should it be affected ? Heaped with kindnesses by you and the Grand Duchess, what can I want more ? I am happy, and doubly so, since it is to your Majesty that I owe my happiness.'

' That is right ; I am pleased with you ! '

On our return to town on 30 August, St. Alexander's Day, her Majesty sent for my husband and gave him, for me, a much handsomer locket than Princess Michael's, adding that he was only to give it me if he were satisfied with me. M. Trochtchinski, the Empress's secretary, told me afterwards that he had been with her when the jeweller brought the locket. Her Majesty showed it to him, saying : ' I intend it for a lady of whom I am very fond. I gave one to Princess Michael, but, by comparing them, you can judge of the difference in my affection.'

How all these kindnesses are graven on my heart !

3

The same year was marked by interesting events : the taking of Courland and Warsaw, and the partition of Poland.[1] This last was the inevitable result of the two others. Polish hatred of the Russians had grown, and

[1] The annexation of Courland to Russia was voted by the Diet of Courland on 18 March 1795 ; Souvorov took Warsaw, 8 November 1794 ; the third and last partition of Poland was effected by the treaties of 3 January and 24 October 1795.

dependence had galled their irritated pride to the utmost. I was witness of a scene that I have never forgotten, and that showed me how great the Empress's charm was.

A deputation of Poles were to be presented to the Empress at Tsarskoie Sielo, and we were waiting in the drawing-room for her to appear. I was much amused at the sneering and hostile attitude of the gentlemen. Her Majesty appeared, and, spontaneously, they all drew themselves up. She assumed a dignity and benevolence of demeanour that at once compelled the deepest reverence from them; she advanced two steps, and the gentlemen were presented, when all dropped on one knee to kiss her hand, submission painted in their faces; the Empress spoke to them, and they looked radiant. In a quarter of an hour she withdrew, making the slow stately curtsey that made all heads bow involuntarily, but by then the Poles were quite vanquished, and went away running and calling out:

'No, she is no woman, she is a siren, a magician; it is impossible to resist her.'

The Court being at the Taurida Palace, I attended every day, and often dined with their Imperial Highnesses, making, with my husband, a party of four. At six o'clock we went to the Empress, who held a reception, and afterwards seated us at a round table, as at Tsarskoie Sielo. There were concerts sometimes, the orchestra being composed of the best musicians of the Court and of some amateurs, amongst others, M. de Zoubov, while the Grand Duchess and I were the leading female vocalists. Her voice is sweet and flexible, and it was a pleasure to listen to her. We used to sing duets together and our voices harmonised very well. One evening, after the symphony, when I was sitting behind the Empress's chair, M. de Zoubov came to look for me and asked me once again to sing his song. The Grand Duchess, who was near the Empress, heard the request, which made her feel uncomfortable, so that she did not venture to raise her eyes, and the Grand Duke, too, was ill at ease. I rose and followed M. de Zoubov to the

harpsichord. He accompanied me on the violin, and I sang the first stanza, which meant nothing at all, and then stopped short.

'What, already! Countess, but it is too short!

I began the first verse over again, and he begged me to sing the second, but I refused, saying that we were stopping the concert for very mournful music, and left the harpsichord. As I passed in front of the Empress, she asked:

'Whatever is this jeremiad?'

'That is what it is, madame; it is the most doleful tune I ever heard.'

I sat down again in my place, and the Grand Duchess's eyes expressed satisfaction. I was more than happy to see her content, and when the concert was over, and I was putting on my cloak to leave, the Grand Duke came and carried me off at a run to the Grand Duchess's study, where he fell on his knees in front of me and showed me as plainly as possible what pleasure my little ruse had given him.

I shall here venture to relate a little farce that I perpetrated one day. A certain Kapiov, a clever man, but a bad character and a perfect sycophant, who used sometimes to visit at my mother-in-law's, was dancing attendance on M. de Zoubov. One day when he came to our house he said he had seen the Grand Duchess at her window with the Countess de Chouvalov, and that he had had a good look at them from the apartments of M. Zoubov, who lived opposite, and who was all eyes and ears. He added that it was a trick of the Countess's to enable her *protégé* to see the Grand Duchess. These details hurt and displeased me, and the next day, when the Grand Duchess wrote to command me to be with her at eleven o'clock, as she wished to rehearse a duet that we were singing at the next concert, I went. Sarti accompanied us, but when he was gone I asked the Grand Duchess if it were true that Countess Chouvalov sometimes took her to the window to chat. She said yes, but that having noticed M. de Zoubov watching her, she had left off standing there. I asked her permission

to do just whatever I liked, which she gave me, so then I begged her to sit at the back of the room and watch the game I was going to show her. I then fetched some pins out of her dressing-room, and when I came back went up to the window, where I saw M. de Zoubov with a telescope focussed upon us. I bowed to him, and he made me a very low bow in return. I looked at him for a moment and then turned my head as if speaking to someone in the room, then climbed on a chair and began to pin the curtains together as high as I could reach, only leaving an opening large enough to put my head through and bow again. He moved hurriedly away, which was what I wanted, and I got down from my chair and saw the Grand Duchess laughing heartily. Towards dinner-time I tried to withdraw, but she would not allow me to do so and kept me with her all day. In the evening we sent for Countess Tolstoy and spent a few hours very gaily together, the six of us, the three husbands and the three wives.[1]

4

A few weeks later the Court went back to the Winter Palace. For fifty-two days the Grand Duke was unwell, and I used every morning to receive a note from the Grand Duchess commanding me to go to see her. Countess Tolstoy was also invited, but did not always go. The best musicians, with Dietz at their head, played Haydn's and Mozart's symphonies and the Grand Duke himself played the violin. We listened to the exquisite music from the next room, where we were almost always alone together,

[1] The honestly meant and successful efforts of Mme. Golovine to defend the Grand Duchess from at any rate the imprudences into which Zoubov's attentions were liable to have drawn her—for she was not entirely indifferent to them—are attested by the letters which the future Empress Elizabeth afterwards wrote to this helpful friend, and in which we find these passages : ' I could beat myself when I think of my follies of that time. . . . I am not speaking of my past follies ; there is no longer any question of them ; I care no more for the *Zodiac* (Zoubov) than for the wind that blows.' (Grand Duke Nicholas Michaelovitch, *L'Impératrice Elisabeth*, vol. i. pp. 455, 461.)

and the perfect harmony that is so pleasant an accompani ment to confidential intercourse was not without its effec on our conversations.

Music works a peculiar magic upon us; it awakes memories and makes all that is round us disappear from our eyes; graves open, the dead rise again, the absent arrive; affections and emotions lay siege to us and seem to enfold us; we enjoy, we suffer, we regret, and feel everything more acutely. For a time—for long, cruel years even—I fled from my harpsichord, for involuntarily I found myself reverting to passages in the music which reminded me of the past. I would tear my thoughts from myself, but could not tear them from my memories. If it had been love I felt, either it would have ended by vanquishing me, or I should have come to loathe my weakness; but this was a right, yet unconquerable feeling which no suffering could lessen, even when she who had inspired it had turned from me, and ceased to respond to it.

When the Grand Duke recovered, these evenings ended, and the Grand Duchess regretted as much as I the tranquil and interesting hours we had spent together. After supper I used to go with the Grand Duchess into her dressing-room, where sometimes we talked.

The Grand Duke remained in the next room with my husband, of whom he was very fond. They used to have discussions and sometimes argued about the liberal ideas with which La Harpe, one of his masters, had tried to imbue him.[1] The moment of separation would arrive at last and the Grand Duke went into his dressing-room with my husband to prepare for the night; the Grand Duchess did the same, and I used to comb out her hair, roll it up, or plait it. Mme Hesler, her principal maid, undressed

[1] Frédéric-César de La Harpe, born in the Canton de Vaud in 1754, died at Lausanne in 1838; was sent away by Catherine, just about this time, on account of his too advanced ideas. He attempted to play a political part in France and Switzerland, was unsuccessful, returned to Russia in 1815, was promoted by Alexander to the rank of General and went back to die in his own country.

her; then she went into her bedroom, got into bed and had me called to take leave of her. I knelt down by her side on the daïs on which her bed was, kissed her hand and left her.

One evening when I arrived at the Grand Duchess's, she came in by one of the doors of her boudoir as I entered through the other, and as soon as she saw me, flew towards me. I confess that, for a moment, I took her for an apparition of goodness. Her hair was down and she was wearing a white dress called a *chemise à la grecque*; she had a little gold chain round her neck and her sleeves were turned up (she had just been playing the harp). I stopped short and exclaimed:

'Heavens! madame, how well you look!' to prevent myself saying: 'My God, how beautiful you are!'

'Whatever is there so extraordinary about my appearance to-day?' she asked.

'I think you look as if you were feeling exceedingly well.'

One says such foolish things when trying to keep back anything from those to whom one would gladly tell everything. She took me into her dressing-room, asked me to accompany her on the piano, took up her harp again, and played 'Les Folies d'Espagne.' I struck a few chords and afterwards we chatted together until supper. There was no concert that evening.

Our conversation never consisted of personalities. Ideas succeeded each other without effort or preparation, for the fulness of the heart supplies inexhaustible topics, the soul ennobles them, and the mind guides their expression. How I pity him who seeks to shine at the expense of others! What a false and shallow brilliance his is! How much pettiness and useless care goes to paint lies which disappear like the specks that momentarily confuse our sight!

There were often little balls and theatrical performances at the Hermitage and sometimes, too, balls in the throne room during the winter 1794–95. A new Courtier made his appearance at them, the Chevalier de Saxe, a natural son

of Prince Xavier, uncle of the King of Saxony. The Empress received him very kindly, but his stay in the capital ended sadly. An Englishman named Macartney, a worthless fellow, led him on to insult a certain Prince Chtcherbatov after the play, and he did so in such a manner as to put himself entirely in the wrong and get himself sent away. Prince Chtcherbatov, not having been able to obtain the satisfaction that his honour required, went to Germany after him, challenged him to a duel, and killed him. I met his sister, the Duchess d'Esclignac, on my journey to France. We happened to be at the same inn at Strasburg, and, on my return, I saw her again at Dresden. After the death of the Chevalier de Saxe she vowed a mortal hatred to the Russians.

As my thoughts range back over the throng of memories that made up my happiness then, involuntarily comparisons occur to my mind and interrupt the thread of my ideas. What is life, if not a constant comparison, a continual linking of the past with the present? Our susceptibilities become blunted with age; our affections grow more settled; our point of view grows clearer; the soul frees itself by degrees from its bonds. It is like a fine picture toned down by age; its high lights lose their brilliance, but it has more vigour and acquires greater merit in the eyes of the connoisseur.

But let us go back to the Court, to human weaknesses—and to my bandeau. Countess Saltykov, the sister-in-law of Countess Chouvalov, was most anxious to be admitted to the concerts at the Hermitage. The Empress granted her and her daughters this favour once or twice, and one day that she was there we were waiting for her Majesty in the drawing-room where the orchestra was seated. Mme de Saltykov, although a woman of great merit, was a victim of that feverish envy that lurks in the atmosphere of a Court, and that nothing seems able to subdue, and the Empress's kindness to me filled her with a sort of uneasiness that sometimes rendered her tone to my small self a little bitter. That day I was wearing a very pretty

head-dress that Mme. de Tolstoy had arranged for me, with a bandeau that came down under my chin. Countess Saltykov, who was tall and imposing and had masculine features, came up to me, looking very cold and hostile :

' Whatever have you got under your chin ? ' she asked. ' What is that band that makes you look as if you had the toothache ? '

' Mme. de Tolstoy has done my hair, madame ; I let her arrange it how she liked, for she has much better taste than I have.'

' I cannot disguise from you the fact that it is very ugly,' she replied.

' But what am I to do, madame ? I cannot alter it just now.'

The Empress appeared and the concert began ; the Grand Duchess sang her song and I sang mine ; afterwards the Empress called me to her (Countess Saltykov standing by her).

' What have you under your chin ? ' said the Empress. ' Do you know that it is very pretty and suits you admirably ? '

' Indeed ! madame, I am very happy to hear that the style pleases your Majesty. Countess Saltykov thought it so exceedingly ugly that I felt quite distressed.'

The Empress slipped her finger through my bandeau, and, turning me round to the Countess, said :

' Look, madame, how well it suits her ! '

Mme. de Saltykov, quite confused, replied :

' It is true that it suits her face rather well.'

The Empress drew me a little nearer to her and winked at me. I felt a mad inclination to laugh, held in check, however, by the sight of the Countess's confusion, which almost made me feel sorry. I kissed the Empress's hand, and withdrew to my seat.

During the same winter a little mistake occurred which served as an additional proof of the Empress's kindness and consideration. She had given orders to Prince Bariatinski, the Court Marshal, to invite to the Hermitage

Countess Panine, now Mme. de Toutolmine.[1] When her Majesty appeared, she saw Countess Vietinghof, a lady whom she had never admitted, but Countess Panine was not present. She seemed to take no notice, and held her reception as usual, but she very quietly asked Prince Bariatinski how it was that Countess Vietinghof came to be at the Hermitage. The Marshal apologised profusely and said that the lackey who had been entrusted with the invitations had made a mistake, and instead of carrying the invitation to Countess Panine's, had taken it to Countess Vietinghof.

'Send for Countess Panine at once, sir, and tell her to come just as she is; with regard to Countess Vietinghof, put her name down on the list for the large gatherings; she must not guess that she is here by mistake.'

Countess Panine arrived, and was received as befitted the daughter of a man whom the Empress always esteemed.

I will here repeat an anecdote which is as much to the honour of the sovereign as of her subject. The Empress had drawn up a code of laws which she submitted to be examined by the Senators. (At that time her Majesty still went to the Senate.) After several sittings, she came to ask the result of their examination of her work, and all the Senators expressed approval of it, except Count Peter Panine, who kept silence. The Empress asked him what he thought.

'Must I reply to your Majesty as a faithful subject or as a courtier?' he asked.

'As the former, without a doubt.'

The Count then expressed a wish to speak to the Empress privately; she moved away from the persons who surrounded her, took up the book, and gave him permission to cross out, without scruple, all that he did not approve of. Panine crossed out everything. The Empress then tore the paper

[1] Sophia Petrovna, daughter of Count Peter Ivanovitch Panine, whom Catherine called 'her personal enemy and offender,' and wife of Ivan Vassilievitch Toutolmine, the Grand Duchess Elizabeth's Chamberlain, later her Equerry.

in two,[1] put it back on the table round which the Senators were sitting and said :

'Gentlemen, Count Panine has just given me a most positive proof of fidelity.'

And, turning to the Count,

'I shall be glad, sir, if you will come and dine with me.'

From that time forth her Majesty never failed to consult him in all her projects, and even when he was at Moscow, wrote to him to ask his advice.[2]

5

Spring arrived. It was always a fresh delight to me to think of our departure for Tsarskoie Sielo. Independently of the return of the summer and of the fine, salubrious air we enjoyed there, I had the pleasure of being with the Grand Duchess almost from morning till night. In town I saw her often, but it was not the same thing. She also wrote to me regularly by my husband, who had the honour of seeing their Imperial Highnesses every day.[3] We left on 6 May 1795, for Tsarskoie Sielo. I was *enceinte*, so, although the games of prisoners' base went on again, I did not take part in them, and stayed with her Majesty, who was kind enough nearly always to make me sit by her. Our conversation generally only revolved round the grace and charms of the Grand Duchess.

I remember that one evening, while they were getting ready for the games, the Empress was sitting between the Grand Duchess and me, and between them there happened to be a little greyhound belonging to the Empress, which the Grand Duchess was stroking. The Empress, who was

[1] This probably refers to the famous *Instructions* drawn up by Catherine in 1767 for her legislative Commission; but the Empress never thought of tearing up this piece of work, of which she always remained very proud, although it was of no use, and it was published several times.

[2] This is more than doubtful.

[3] This correspondence has been preserved and extracts from it are given later on.

talking to me, and whose head was turned towards me, tried to stroke the dog, too, and accidentally laid her hand over that of the Grand Duchess, who stooped and kissed it.

'Dear me,' said her Majesty, 'I did not know your hand was there,' to which the Grand Duchess replied: 'If it was not intentional, then it was a fortunate chance.' The remark, uttered so gracefully and appropriately, furnished the Empress with a fresh opportunity of extolling the Grand Duchess, for whom she felt a specially tender affection.

The Grand Duchess, who was young and timid, was not as much at her ease with her Majesty as she might have been, and the underhand dealings and intrigues of Count Saltykov added still more to the slight embarrassment she felt. The Grand Duchess Marie was growing more and more jealous of the Empress's affection for her daughter-in-law, and this unfortunate feeling likewise increased her ill-feeling towards me. From now she began to try to poison the minds of the Grand Duke Alexander and the Grand Duchess Elizabeth against me, by representing me to them as a dangerous and intriguing woman. Alas! I was only too little so. The frank and natural manner in which I behaved was so opposed to the policy of the Court that, if I could have harboured calculating ideas at all, I should have acted more prudently and diplomatically than I did. My active zeal and my devotion only allowed me to perceive a possible useful end to be attained for her to whom I would have given my life, and I did not think of the risks that I ran daily myself. But God is great and just, and Time wears out the weapons of calumny and tears away the veil that hides truth from our eyes, while conscience triumphs over our troubles and gives the calm of mind that enables us to bear all things.

On 30 May we went with their Imperial Highnesses for a drive to Peterhof, starting very early and only arriving back at Tsarskoie Sielo late at night. The weather was fine, and we spent the morning in the grounds, and after

dinner the Grand Duchess and I walked up and down the terrace of ' Mon Plaisir.' [1]

This is a fine, imposing spot, with a suggestion of the age of chivalry about it ; beautiful waterfalls, tall trees, long avenues and the sea make up a grand and dignified whole. I was talking with the Grand Duchess, both of us leaning against the parapet, our conversation interrupted only by the regular noise of the waves breaking against the beach, and she speaking with so much earnest feeling that I was quite affected.

Suddenly she took me into the little palace which overlooks the terrace, and there unreservedly laid bare her most intimate thoughts and feelings. That moment was the triumph and the presage of her future strength, the proof of her confidence in me and the justification of the oath of fidelity to her that I took in the bottom of my heart, and that has been the source of my unbounded attachment to her.

This conversation of ours inclined us to enjoy everything doubly. We rejoined the company, and at ten o'clock left Peterhof. As we passed the country house of the Grand Equerry, M. de Narychkine, we found him and all his family assembled at his garden gate, and, out of politeness, stopped to speak to them. The Grand Equerry implored their Imperial Highnesses to come in, and we found a large company present. The five daughters of the house bustled about affectedly, and a perfect carnival was going on. This house was remarkable for the incongruity of the company that daily met there, for M. de Narychkine was only happy when his drawing-room was filled, no matter with whom. The worth and rank of the persons he invited were a matter of indifference to him.

This drive of 30 May [2] is one of my dearest recollections.

[1] A little wooden palace, built by Peter I. The Empress Catherine II made use of it occasionally at the beginning of her reign. (Author's note.)

[2] This drive of 30 May was indeed the culminating point of an affection destined to a cruel return. The letters of the Grand Duchess written to her friend about this time, and recently published (Grand Duke Nicholas

There are moments in life which seem to determine one's future, and such a one nothing can efface from the memory.

Mikhaïlovitch, *L'Impératrice Elisabeth*, vol. i. p. 445 and after), show her even more ardently loving than Countess Golovine relates, and so extravagant in expression that she would expose herself to misunderstanding had it not been that the allusions made by them both to 30 May determine the nature of the enthusiastic feelings associated with this date.

We here append a few extracts from these letters :

Friday, 11 *August, between twelve a.m. and one o'clock.*

' Oh ! it is cruel, my dear friend, to be here (in the Taurida Palace). . . . I assure you that I do not enjoy life when I am separated from you. I have just been for a walk with the *Impresario* (Countess Catherine Petrovna Chouvalov), and seeing the two Protassov girls in the distance, force of habit made me take them for you two. When I thought afterwards how impossible it is for me to see you in this garden, my heart sank ; I have tears in my eyes at the present moment. How are you, my dear ? Did you sleep well ? I have not even the hope of seeing you to-day, as I thought I should. But come, I beg of you, to dinner the first day you can. I cannot bear the Taurida Palace . . . but, when I have seen you in it once, it will seem less unendurable. . . . You have no idea how I feel when I reflect that I can no longer hope to see you pass under my windows. . . . You are so far away ! See, dear, I send you this pansy,[1] which will be faded this evening, but is so pretty ! I thought of you as I gathered it, and, as all my thoughts are of you, this goes straight to its object. . . . Farewell, my friend . . . tell me, when you reply, all that you have done, and all that you have thought about since we left each other. As for me, I feel a discomfort and a void within me, and a strange sadness that is worse than a sharp, keen pain. You are constantly in my mind, and you agitate me till I can do nothing. *Oh ! I have lost the sweet thought that occurred to me this morning, etc.* It is very, very cruel. . . .'

Tuesday, 12 *December* 1794, *at* 8 *o'clock in the evening.*

' It is after seeing you, it is with my heart full of you, that I am writing to you, my dear, my very dear one. To return to the subject of your note. What ? You ask me whether I think you a suspicious person ? Can such an idea enter your mind ? I entertain suspicions of you ! Is it possible ! No, never ! I love you doubly in spite of everything, and I will love you in spite of all the world. For that matter, they cannot *forbid* me to love you, and I am in a manner authorised by *someone else* who has quite as much right, if not more, to *order me* to love you. You understand me, I hope. Come, we shall have to suffer for a time, but I am sure that it will soon be over. I am too young to begin to suffer yet. . . . Fate separates me from everything that I love. . . . No, I cannot believe

[1] *Pensée*, thought.

A thousand incidents succeed one another, but are unable to dim the remembrance of it; the passing of years, troubles,

that it will last. If not before, at any rate we shall meet in the summer. No, I cannot believe that I was born to be so unfortunate. *As long as things go on as they are doing, there will be no change.* (Do you understand?) I think I shall be happy, and I shall. If they change, perpetual sadness will be my portion, and this is my only comfort. God! I am losing my wits; I am wandering, absolutely. . . . Ah! if that goes on I shall go mad. You occupy my thoughts all day and until I go to sleep; if I wake in the night, at once you come into my mind.'

Saturday, 17 March 1795, after 7 o'clock (in the evening).

'I must relieve my heart: it is too full. I am mortally uneasy about you, dear friend. Heavens! You are suffering and seriously ill, and I am separated from you, and cannot see you; the thought of losing you, great God! No, I dare not think of it. . . . Oh, Heavens! If you only knew my torments at the present moment! There is nothing I can compare my anguish with. . . . Oh! God, how *dearly I love* you, my only friend. You alone make life bearable *here*. Think, if I were to lose you. . . . Oh! my dear, promise me that this summer, when we are able to see each other more often . . . you will let me enjoy all the happiness of being with you, that you will not try *yourself* to keep me away from you. . . . Be my friend absolutely, treat me as if I were under you, advise, scold me. Oh! that would be the happiness of my life! I am not yet worthy to be your friend: I have done nothing to deserve it, and, with those everlasting scruples of yours, which distress me so, I never shall be. But you are really mine; I have hardly a feeling that you do not know, and I will prove to you even more plainly that you are. Oh! how delightful to make you read my thoughts and look into my heart! Yes, I can say it—you alone know me thoroughly. Even my husband does not know me as well as you do.'

No date.

'What a wretched thing to be reduced to writing to each other! Think whether, at the present time, I must not be glad of 30 May. Oh! God, how happy it makes me to remember it. But the thought of the past poisons my joy. . . .'

Thursday, 8 February 1795, between 10 and 11 o'clock in the morning.

'I love you, my dear; I love you dearly. Everything is a burden to me when I am separated from you. Be my friend, guide me, advise me. I feel a need to love stronger than anything else. . . . I want to yield myself unreservedly to my affection for you. . . . Oh! how willingly I would give up every pleasure, every amusement, in order to be constantly with you. . . . All Petersburg is a burden to me if you are not there. . . . *Nothing* would keep me here if you left. . . .'

Sunday, 22 April 1795, at half-past ten at night.

'No, my dear, no; my heart is too full, I cannot resist it; my thoughts are killing me. To cry and think of you is my occupation all day

and our brief flashes of happiness, alike seem to centre in this one ecstatic moment.

long. I have scarcely strength to keep back my tears before people when I see you and when I am thinking of you. . . . Heavens! what power you have over me! If I might spend two hours alone with you, you should know all my most secret thoughts. What can I say to you? That I adore you; yes, that is the right expression, for when one adores, one respects and esteems at the same time, and that is what I feel for you. . . . Would not one say, on reading this, that it was written to a lover?'

No date.

'At last, dear friend, I can write to you again. Oh, dear! oh, dear! if I were with you, how happy I should be! I assure you that anyone who loves you has to be good and all that one ought to be. You rule me, although away from me, and in that I find my happiness. Oh! let it always be like this, my dear friend! I love thee so much, so much! . . . Oh, yes, it was thou, my friend, who taught me to think. Yes, you opened my eyes and cleared up the chaos in my soul; you swept and garnished the room in every meaning of the word. Farewell, friend of my heart, I am being interrupted, and when I write to you, I want to give my whole attention to you.'

Sunday, at 9 o'clock in the evening.

'. . . If you only knew the pleasure that your letters are to me: I fancy that I hear you speak. Oh! the 30ths, my friend. How long they are in coming round. Dear! all the feelings that the mere remembrance of those sweet moments brings back to me! The Grand Duke, who has been reading your letters, has just asked me what they mean; I have told him, in part, and, thinking of that happy 30 May, I am quite upset. Ah! I hope you can picture how dear to me the date of the day when I gave myself to you entirely must be. . . .'

No date, but probably in October 1795.

'The Princess of Coburg has offered to deliver a letter for me. . . . I am telling mamma the story of 30 May *and all that has resulted from it* and that preceded it. You will understand that I mention you not a little. Do not be afraid that memory *has revived my feelings*; that is only true in a good sense, for my *health* is divine. . . . Farewell; perhaps you will have your baby on 30 October: how nice that would be, indeed. My God! how I love you! it bursts from me all the time.

No date.

'. . . Oh! dear, my friend, how your letter reminds me of your talk; those conversations that I love so very, very dearly! I feel myself another person, superior to everything, when I think of you, and of what you constantly repeat to me. . . . Oh! how I love you, how very dearly I love you! . . . My God! it will be so long before I see you. Patience, I must condemn myself to vegetate until the month of May. Ah! my friend, it is to you that I owe this repose, the only happiness that I can

Our fleet was starting for England,[1] and the Empress suggested to their Imperial Highnesses that they should go to Cronstadt to see it. The Grand Duke welcomed the suggestion, and the Grand Duchess agreed to go too, on condition that I should accompany her. Countess Chouvalov was in town just then with her daughter, who had been confined. After the expedition had been decided upon, M. Saltykov went early in the morning to point out to her that I ought not to be of the party, as it would particularly annoy the Grand Duchess Marie. I guessed this fresh intrigue before I had been told about it. The Grand Duke said nothing to me about the journey, but the Grand Duchess never ceased repeating how anxious she was for me to go with her, adding kindly that she should not enjoy anything if I were not there. After dinner, I was standing at the window of my uncle's apartments, when I saw the Grand Duke arrive.

'I have been looking for you all over the garden,' he said; 'I wanted to see you.'

'Your Imperial Highness is too good; it is not long since I had the honour of seeing you. This eagerness, I confess, looks a little suspicious; I am afraid it is the result of Count Saltykov's visit.'

The Grand Duke blushed and said:

'What an idea, Madame la Grosse!' (the name by which he used to call me at that time); 'I wanted to see you. Good-bye! We shall meet this evening!'

'I do not know why, your Imperial Highness, but I have a presentiment that something is going to happen.'

At six o'clock I went up to the Empress. She appeared

enjoy here, contentment with myself. Yes, I love an angel in loving you, dear, dear one. . . .'

The passages printed in italics are underlined in the original.

[1] In 1795, in pursuance of an alliance contracted with Great Britain and Austria, a Russian squadron of twenty ships of the line, under the command of Admiral Khanykov, went to blockade, in concert with the English, the ports of Holland that had been taken by the French. (See Viessielago, *Histoire de la flotte russe*, 1893, vol i. p. 215.)

at once, but their Imperial Highnesses were a little late. Her Majesty came up to me and said :

' I hope you will be one of the party to Cronstadt.'

' I have received no commands,' I replied.

' But how can they separate you from your husband ? Why should you not accompany the Grand Duchess ? '

I bowed without replying, for I saw that the Empress was annoyed.

' For that matter,' she added, ' if they take no notice of you, I will do you the honours myself.'

Their Imperial Highnesses arrived, but the Empress remained very grave. She sat down at the boston table, and we at the round table, as usual, and I told the Grand Duchess all that had just taken place, at which she was delighted, for she foresaw at once that I should accompany her. She called the Grand Duke and repeated what I had just said, whereupon he implored me to go with them, but I pretended to stand on my dignity, and pointed out to him what dangers he would incur with Count Saltykov. I was, I confess, rather provoking.

After the Empress's evening was over I had supper with their Highnesses. They begged me again to go with them, and I met them with the same refusal. Afterwards I went home, but just as I was going to bed the Grand Duke sent for my husband, who told me on his return that I must unquestionably go.

We set out very early next morning, their Imperial Highnesses being accompanied by Count Saltykov, my husband, myself, Count and Countess Tolstoy, and by M. and Mme. de Toutolmine, who had asked to join the party, as also by the maid of honour and the lord in waiting who were then in attendance. The weather was superb, and we walked about a good deal before dinner, which was served at ' Mon Plaisir,' where we stayed the two days we were at Peterhof. The sea was calm and promised well for the morrow, while the sun, as it neared its setting, was gloriously bright, and with its gilded rays lighted up the tall, old trees, the lengthening

shadows of which threw up into strong relief the bright lights above.

The wide walk up the centre of the garden rises in terraces up to the great palace, and is interrupted only by fountains, which shoot up to a great height and fall again in flashes of diamond spray. The garden ends in a canal leading to the sea, and in this canal were anchored the cutters and sloops which were to take us the next day to Cronstadt. The boatmen were sitting in a ring round a huge pot on board one of the boats, eating their soup with a wooden spoon, and the Grand Duchess stopped for a moment to watch them, then went down a few steps and asked them what they were eating.

'Soup, our Mother,'[1] they all answered at once.

She went down to the boat and asked for a spoon to taste it. The enthusiasm roused among the boatmen by this good-natured impulse was terrific, and they cheered till their shouts echoed again; then the Grand Duchess went quietly back up the steps and into the garden, with the same calm, angelic expression on her beautiful face that still graces it, and took my arm in silence. I said nothing, but the boatmen's cries of delight were ringing in my ears.

The next day we embarked for Cronstadt in weather that was still fine and calm. We went direct to the fleet, which was in the roadstead, decked out with flags, while the yards, all manned with sailors, presented a most imposing spectacle. We went on board Admiral Khanykov's vessel to the accompaniment of shouts of 'Hurrah!' he being in command of the fleet, and an excellent navy breakfast was served to their Imperial Highnesses. The cabins were very pretty, as we saw, and we also walked about the deck.

We dined at Cronstadt with Admiral Pouchkine, but a profusion of ill-prepared dishes hardly tended to tempt the appetite; however, youth, good health and exercise are a very good seasoning, even for poor food. Greediness is the weakness of age—a very sad and unpleasant remnant of the

[1] This is the most respectful expression that the people can make use of. (Author's note.)

capacity of enjoyment. Young people enjoy too little to think of their stomachs; their inclinations are of a more fastidious order.

After dinner we sailed to Cronstadt, a very picturesque voyage, and towards evening re-embarked for Peterhof. The even movement of the boat calmed us and made us sleepy, which seems to be its usual effect on those who do not suffer from seasickness. The Grand Duchess laid her head on my shoulder and quietly dropped off to sleep. The Grand Duke stood by the helm, but all the ladies were drowsy. Princess Galitzine, the maid of honour, now Comtesse de Saint-Priest, fought very hard against her sleepiness and made frantic grimaces in the effort to keep awake. Count Saltykov watched the Grand Duchess as she leaned against my shoulder, out of the corner of his eye, with a forced smile, but I was glad to be bearing her weight, and would not have changed places with anyone.

We had supper early, that we might make the most of the next morning. As soon as she awoke the Grand Duchess came into my room, and surprised me and Mme. de Tolstoy undressed. These moments of liberty are the greatest pleasure of princes, who are not sorry to descend temporarily from their lofty heights. The Grand Duchess was destined to ascend a throne, but at sixteen years of age it is permissible to forget such things. She was far from foreseeing that, in a very few years, she would find herself the cynosure of all eyes, in that position where grandeur and dignity must hide all unreality, and justify that respect and that line of demarcation that are the mainsprings of order and safety.

The Grand Duchess commanded me to take breakfast with her, and Mme. Hesler made us some excellent toast, which the Grand Duke, too, came and shared. After breakfast we read for some time and afterwards the three of us, the Grand Duchess, Countess Tolstoy and I, walked about together. We left Peterhof rather late in the afternoon, all of us delighted with our little expedition.

The acquisition of Poland, after the last partition, let

loose every passion of cupidity and self-interest: every mouth was open to ask and every pocket to receive. M. de Zoubov very modestly requested the starostie[1] intended for the Prince de Condé, and a refusal was the inevitable result of his indiscretion. This made him go about in the sulks, but he soon threw off that attitude. Authority, backed by strength and justice, obliged him to submit and to swallow his ill-humour. The same starostie was asked from the Emperor Paul by the Comte de Choiseul-Gouffier, and he would incontestably have obtained it had the Emperor not happened to mention the matter to Prince Bezborodko, who explained to him of what importance the estate was. M. de Choiseul withdrew, with his usual mild expression, after obtaining a smaller estate.

I have never known anyone with such easy tears as M. de Choiseul. I still remember his presentation at Tsarskoie Sielo; at every word that the Empress spoke to him his blinking eyes filled with tears, and when seated at table opposite the Empress he never took his eyes from her; but his melancholy and respectful expression could not altogether hide the innate craftiness of a little soul, and M. de Choiseul, in spite of his cleverness, made no dupes.

One evening when we were out walking her Majesty took us to the lake, sat down on a bench and commanding me to sit by her, suggested to their Imperial Highnesses that they should feed the swans with bread, a meal that they were accustomed to receive. The whole Court joined in the amusement and while this was going on the Empress began talking to me of her *moax*, a kind of American cat that everyone was afraid of, but which was much attached to her.

'Just fancy,' she said, 'what an injustice they were guilty of yesterday.' (I had been ill, and had not been at the Court.) 'While we were in the colonnade my poor moax jumped on the Grand Duchess Elizabeth's shoulder and tried to play with her. She pushed him away with her

[1] Starosties were estates which formed part of the crown lands of Poland, a life-interest in which was granted by the kings to their subjects for a small rent, intended to go towards the upkeep of the army.

fan, and her action roused such thoughtless zeal among the company that the poor animal was driven off and I have not seen him since.'

Her Majesty had hardly finished speaking when the moax appeared behind us on the back of the seat. Unfortunately I had on a hat similar to the one that the Grand Duchess had been wearing the evening before, and he took me for her, but, on smelling my face, noticed his mistake, dug his claw into my upper lip and bit into my cheek.

The Empress uttered a cry, calling me in Russian by the most affectionate names, and the blood streamed from my lip, which alarmed her still more. I begged her not to be afraid, and with one hand I seized my enemy's nose and mouth, while with the other I took it by the tail and gave it to the page that her Majesty had called to my assistance.

She was extremely pleased that I had not been afraid, even saying things that were much too flattering after so slight a proof of courage, and she wiped the blood from my lip with her handkerchief, telling me again how glad she was to see that I did not give way to vapours and fuss. The poor moax was put into an iron cage and sent into town to the Hermitage. We did not see him again.

Rather an amusing incident occurred that summer. The Empress having graciously given permission to her lords and gentlemen in waiting to remain at Tsarskoie Sielo as long as they liked, the consequence was that they neglected their attendance on the Grand Duke Paul, and M. de Rastoptchine, who was with him, could not get away at all. Impatient at the exile, so to speak, that he was enduring, he wrote a very cutting circular in the form of a kind of challenge to all his colleagues. The letter was so worded as to cast ridicule on each by giving the detailed reasons of their defection, and my lords were in a pretty stir about it, and all wanted to fight M. de Rastoptchine, who accepted their challenges and asked my husband to be his second. Prince Michael Galitzine and Count Chouvalov were to appear first. The place of meeting was arranged, but they were all so philosophical over it that my husband, taking

advantage of the peaceable frame of mind they were in, managed to settle the matter amicably. An effort was also made to calm Prince Bariatinski, the brother of Countess Tolstoy.

The story reached the Empress's ears, and, to make an example, she banished M. de Rastoptchine to his estates with his wife, the second niece of Mlle. Protassov, whom he had married a few months before.[1] His banishment was a great trouble to the Grand Duke Alexander and the Grand Duchess Elizabeth, who liked him very much, and the rest of us were all much depressed. The Empress spent the evening in the colonnade, and noticing our long faces, she turned to Count Stroganov, who was standing by her side, and said :

' They look as if they thought they had lost Rastoptchine for ever ! '

She sent Prince Bariatinski to Warsaw, to M. de Souvorov, for the war was still going on, and he returned at the end of the campaign, which was followed by peace. M. de Rastoptchine was recalled a few months later. His exile earned him the favour of the Grand Duke Paul, who from that time forth chose to regard him as a man who had been persecuted on his account.

It was an especially fine summer that year, but the time for our departure from Tsarskoie Sielo nevertheless came at last, and for my part I saw it draw near with regret. The month of August was already ten days old, and the nights, though a little dark, were mild and calm, when the Grand Duchess proposed to me that we should go for a walk after the Empress's evening was over, to which I agreed, on condition that the Grand Duke and my husband should accompany us. It was agreed that I was to wait for them with my husband in the central avenue, and that after

[1] Count Rastoptchine explains the matter as follows in a letter addressed to Count Vorontsov : ' They put it all down to a letter I had written . . . complaining of my colleagues. . . . It is true that in my temper I had called some of them blackguards. . . . But, be it noted, she (Catherine II) had read the letter and laughed at it.' (*Archives Vorontsov*, viii. 98, 99.)

changing her dress she should join us with the Grand Duke.

In a quarter of an hour she arrived, holding his arm, and wearing a waistcoat of blue cashmere and a black beaver hat. We both sat down on a bench, while the Grand Duke and my husband walked to the end of the avenue. All was still round us and we could detect the ripple, as it were, that is present in the air of a calm night.

We kept silence : the silence of perfect confidence and mutual understanding. Friends seek each other and wish to be together, and when in each other's company are silent and satisfied ; friendship is what keeps the heart alive, and however vehement it may be, a gentle treatment is enough for it.

The Grand Duchess broke the silence to tell me what was passing in her mind, but words did not seem to be enough for her. Suddenly, a light breeze swaying the branches over her head, she uttered a sharp cry, and exclaimed :

'God ! I thank thee ! Nature herself is in tune with my mood.'

I took her arm and persuaded her to go to meet the Grand Duke, who was coming back. He told us to wait for him in a rotunda near the rose garden, and said he would go with my husband down to the ruin [1] to see that there were no thieves about. The Grand Duchess was very glad to find herself alone with me again, and we went into the rotunda, which is a sort of summer-house, open all the way round, and with a dome-shaped roof supported by columns. We sat down on the circular seat and the Grand Duchess leaned against me and went on with what she was saying, while I drank in eagerly every word that fell from her lips. A pure, fresh heart, susceptible of such deep and beautiful thoughts, what a fair thing it is to study ! I never detected in the Grand Duchess either pettiness of thought or those commonplace sentiments which make up, more or less, the novel of life, which everyone knows quite well,

[1] A building with a tower, at the end of the garden. (Author's note.)

and which can be guessed beforehand. If she could have confided all that was in her heart and mind to one who could have understood her, what virtues and graces would she not have revealed, even before the day of her troubles and tribulations! But never understood, always unappreciated and repulsed, she, with her noble mind and sensitive heart, her vivid and lofty imagination, was destined to the most cruel abnegations.

What dangers any but she would have been exposed to! But her soul, stronger than her passions, rent aside the mists that veil the face of truth, and she discovered the pure light that shineth in darkness, the lamp that neither storms nor tempests can put out, and that we find within our own hearts.

But to return to the rotunda. Eleven o'clock had struck some time, the night was growing darker, and it was getting very late, but still the Grand Duke had not come back to fetch us, and in spite of the charm of the conversation of my sacred charge I was struggling against a fear lest we should be surprised by some drunkard or intruder. But the Grand Duke arrived at last, and we made our way home, had supper, and said good-night later than usual.

The next day I went very early into the English garden and told my negro to bring me out a camera obscura that the Empress had given me, which I set up opposite the colonnade on the other side of the lake, to draw the view, very pretty from that point. The lake being wide, I was at a very convenient distance for the perspective of my sketch, and as this camera obscura was large and convenient I could get half my body inside it and get a very comfortable support for my arms. I began to work, and whilst I was so engaged Countess Braniçka passed down the other side of the lake. She saw my little arrangement, but could not make out what it was; she stopped and stared at the square object and the long green curtain reaching down to the ground, and asked her footman what he thought it could be. He, being very ready with his tongue, but rather devoid of sense, replied

promptly, 'It is Mme. d'Esterhazy getting herself electrified.' The Countess walked round the lake, and when she came up to me told me her footman's ridiculous invention, at which we both laughed very heartily ; later on she told the Empress about it and she, too, was much amused.

One evening the Grand Duke asked her Majesty's permission to remain at home, and Dietz was sent for to bring his viol and with him three other first-rate musicians to play quartets. When the little concert was over the Grand Duchess commanded me to accompany her to her own room. 'For a long time,' she said, 'I have been wanting to show you a sort of diary that I intend to send my mother when I have a good and safe opportunity. I do not wish to send it away without your knowing about it and asking your opinion. Stay here' (we were in the bedroom) 'and I will fetch it, and you must be as sincere as you always are.'

She returned, and we sat down by the fireplace ; I read the book and threw it into the fire. The Grand Duchess uttered a sharp exclamation and she seemed surprised :

'What are you doing ? ' she said, a little impatiently.

'What I ought, madame. What you have written is full of the grace and charm and the unrestrained confidence that is natural between a young girl and her mother ; but, read two thousand miles away from you, it will only make the princess, your mother, uneasy, and how can you reassure her ? You would be sowing agitation and distress in her heart ! Speaking and writing are so different ; a word is enough to the one who loves us.'

The Grand Duchess yielded with touching grace and said things to me that deeply affected me.

The little book was the outpouring of a soul confiding unreservedly in a beloved mother, and exaggerating dangers through its own noble humility and great distrust of self. The style of it revealed the nature of her studies. History had always been her favourite reading. Study of the human heart taught her to know and judge herself, but the nobility of her mind combined with her high

principles make her indulgent towards others and very severe with herself.

One other reason that I had for destroying what she had written was that I wished to deprive the Grand Duchess herself of the opportunity of reading it. She needed to be braced against her touching mistrust of her own powers, which might have discouraged her.

The Empress never gave notice of her departure from Tsarskoie Sielo. She left just when we least expected it, and this often caused mistakes that highly entertained her. One day word was brought that her Majesty was going out to drive, and this very much worried all those who had the honour of driving from Tsarskoie Sielo into town with her. Count Stackelberg was especially puzzled and at once ordered his valet to pack his things. Her Majesty got into a carriage with seats for six, which she did me the honour of inviting me to enter, with Mlle. Protassov, M. de Zoubov, Passek, the general aide-de-camp, and Count Stackelberg. She had given her orders to the coachman beforehand and he took us for a time the same way as usual, then drove us along the road to the town. Count Stackelberg made a sign to M. de Passek that he had guessed right, but at that very moment the coachman left the high road and entered the woods again. This running about quite bewildered Count Stackelberg, who did not know what to think. My presence, however, ought to have reassured him, for I never drove back into the town with her Majesty. We returned quietly to the castle, but the Count's valet had started with the luggage and had to be sent for back, which caused a good deal of confusion and was a source of great amusement to the Empress and the whole company.

As it was late she withdrew at once. I accompanied their Imperial Highnesses to their apartments, where I remained till eleven o'clock. Towards midnight, as I was going to bed, a note arrived from the Grand Duchess asking me, in the Grand Duke's name and her own, to go as quickly as possible to them, as they had something very particular to tell me. I told my negro to take a lantern and come

with me. It was a warm, dark night, and deep silence reigned everywhere as I crossed the great court and went through the corridors of the castle. Only the sentinels called out : 'Who goes there ?' As I passed along the terrace in front of her Majesty's private staircase I came to the picket posted there, and the officer regarded me with amazement. I arrived at the private entrance, as I had been ordered to do, and found there the Grand Duchess's footman, who took me to her boudoir. She arrived the next minute, and the Grand Duke with her ; she in her nightdress and night-cap, and the Grand Duke in an overcoat and slippers, and they asked my advice on some matters of no importance whatever, which might very well have been deferred till the next day. Had they waited they would have spared me the remarks and conjectures of those who spied upon me. From this time forth more than ever I was dubbed an intriguing and mysterious woman. But the Grand Duke pretended at that time that I was the only one who could settle their differences. Harmony being re-established, I left them at one o'clock.

A few days later the Empress left Tsarskoie Sielo and we stood on the lawn, behind the railings, to watch her pass. Their Imperial Highnesses remained twenty-four hours longer and I went back to town with them. The departure of the Empress was regretted by everyone : the charcoal-burners, the water-carriers, everyone in fact who lived at Tsarskoie Sielo wept and ran after her carriage.

CHAPTER IV

1795—1796

1. Return to St. Petersburg—Birth of a daughter—A new friend: the Countess Schoenburg—The arrival of the Princesses of Coburg—The betrothal of the Grand Duke Constantine—Mme Vigée-Lebrun—Revolution in dress. 2. Marriage of the Grand Duke—His eccentricities—The Grand Duchess Anne—The Princes Czartoryski—The Alexander Palace—The Grand Duchess Elizabeth and Zoubov—Fresh love affairs—The Czartoryski brothers and the two Grand Duchesses—La Nouvelle Héloïse—A *ménage à trois*—An intriguer of high rank: Princess Radziwill. 3. Birth of the Grand Duke Nicholas—The excesses of the Grand Duke Constantine—A marriage that was not arranged: the King of Sweden and the Grand Duchess Alexandrine—Indisposition of the Empress—Gloomy presentiments—The last ball at the Court of Catherine II.

I

Shortly after we returned to town the Grand Duchess had fever, and, to crown my troubles, my husband fell rather seriously ill. The Grand Duke came almost every day to see him, and I gave him breakfast. At four o'clock I went to the Taurida Palace to stay until eight with the Grand Duchess. One evening I found her more depressed than usual and struggling to keep awake for fear that I might go away if she went to sleep. I begged her to lie down on her couch and to sleep, promising her faithfully not to leave her, and she consented, on condition that I would sit by her side, so that she would wake if I got up.

It was a pleasure to watch her sleep. Her slumber was peaceful and I rejoiced to see her quiet and resting. I may venture to say that I have always felt a maternal

affection for the Grand Duchess. I grew more and more convinced of her friendship for me and of her goodness, and I was conscious of neither doubts, nor difficulties, nor mistrust, so that the harmony in our mutual relations gave our friendship a simple and natural course.

Involuntarily I find myself reverting to this subject whenever I try to retrace my recollections. I have none that are deeper or more tender than those which centre round the Grand Duchess. This period is the most noteworthy in my life, and has influenced the remainder of my existence. The scene will change soon; new actors will come upon the scene, unforeseen circumstances will arise, and one sad event will consummate my troubles. I shall be left alone with my heart, and there I should like to cut my story short.

The Grand Duchess having recovered and my husband being well again, I resumed my ordinary manner of life. There was talk of the arrival of the Duchess of Coburg with the princesses, her daughters, and of the marriage of the Grand Duke Constantine, and there were several balls at the Taurida Palace.

The Court moved to the Winter Palace. Although I was not expecting to be confined for some time I was not feeling well and the doctors ordered me to remain at home, and, indeed, it was quite a necessary precaution. Mme. de Tolstoy was also *enceinte*, but she was expecting her baby before me. She had a son, and, ill though I was feeling, I nursed her for some time. As soon as she was well again she came to stay at my house for three weeks, and helped to nurse me in my turn. I was not very ill, and on 22 November I had a daughter, who, happily, is still spared to me.

I must not pass over in silence my friendship with a delightful woman, the Countess v. Schoenburg, daughter of M. de Sievers,[1] who had arrived the year before, with

[1] Count Jean-Jacques (1731–1808), originally from Holstein, a diplomatist in the service of Russia. See Waliszewski, *Autour d'un trône*, p. 41 and after.

her mother, from Dresden. Mme. de Tolstoy had met her during her travels, but I had only seen her when she was a girl of fourteen and came for a few months to St. Petersburg. Her mother knew mine very well and brought her daughter to see me. From the first time we met Mme. de Schoenburg felt extraordinarily drawn to me, as she has often told me since. She was an exceptional woman, wise, and gifted, and pure in heart. She knew five languages and music perfectly, she drew like an artist, was tender-hearted and affectionate, and had an honourable man's sense of probity. She spent her time between Mme. de Tolstoy and me, checking the warmth of the friendship she felt for me for fear of wronging Mme. de Tolstoy. I might say of her that the keynote of her character was tact. She nursed me during my confinement.

At that time I was supremely happy. My husband and my two friends were never away from me. The Grand Duchess showed me sincere affection and wrote to me often. My little daughter was splendidly well. In this atmosphere of secure happiness I rapidly regained strength.

A month after my confinement Mme. de Tolstoy, happening to be alone with me, said :

' Two days ago the Grand Duchess sent to inquire about you. I will go and see her for a little, and tell her how you are, and bring you back news of her.'

She went, and a quarter of an hour afterwards there arrived from the Grand Duchess a note overflowing with tenderness and affection. I replied to it with all the warmth of the affection I felt for her, and my reply had just been sent off when Mme. de Tolstoy returned, very much displeased.

' It is incredible,' she said ; ' if I had not spoken about you to the Grand Duchess I verily believe she would not have asked how you were ! '

I smiled and showed her my precious note, which astonished her beyond measure. The Grand Duchess had not needed to speak of me.

As I only made my reappearance at Court in January, I witnessed neither the arrival of the Coburg Princesses in

October nor their departure five weeks later, nor the abjuration of Princess Julia and her betrothal to the Grand Duke Constantine ; however, a person well worthy of credence and who saw everything furnished me with the details I give here.

The Grand Duchess of Coburg arrived at Petersburg with her three daughters : Princess Sophia, Princess Antoinette (who afterwards, when she was married to Prince Alexander of Wurtemberg, spent a great part of her life in Russia), and Princess Julia, and they made their first appearance at Court at a concert at the Hermitage. The Empress and the Court had already arrived, and the courtiers, impelled by curiosity, crowded near the door through which the foreign Princesses were to enter. At last they arrived, and the embarrassment that the poor Duchess felt at finding herself in the largest and most brilliant Court in Europe did not contribute to add to the nobility and dignity of her very ungraceful appearance. Her three daughters were also very much embarrassed, but had all more or less pretty faces. Extreme youth is often enough to excite interest in the onlookers.

However, this embarrassment was not of long duration, especially in the case of the youngest girl ; in fact, two days after their first meeting, in the middle of a ball at the Hermitage, she went up to the Grand Duchess Elizabeth, took hold of her by the ear, and used to her, in German, a term of endearment which is the equivalent of *pet*, or *darling*. Her *naïveté* astonished the Grand Duchess, but nevertheless gratified her rather than otherwise. On the whole the arrival of these Princesses and their stay in the capital was a pleasure to the Grand Duchess. It was too short a time since she had left her own country and family for her not to miss them very keenly, and if the new arrivals did not remind her in any way of her own people, at any rate they could discuss the thousand and one insignificant details that one can talk about only to one's compatriots, and she could hear expressions used that reminded her of her own childhood.

There were plenty of balls and entertainments during the visit of the Coburg Princesses, amongst others a large masked ball at the Court, which was memorable to the Grand Duchess because it was the only occasion on which the Empress ever showed herself displeased with her. The celebrated Mme. Lebrun[1] had recently arrived in St. Petersburg and the costumes in her portraits and pictures had brought about a revolution in taste. The antique style was beginning to find favour, and Countess Chouvalov, who was capable of childish infatuations for anything new or foreign, persuaded the Grand Duchess Elizabeth to allow herself to be dressed by Mme. Lebrun for the masked ball which was to take place. The Grand Duchess agreed willingly and without considering whether the step would be likely to please the Empress or not, supposing, of course, that Countess Chouvalov was unlikely to suggest anything that would vex the Empress. The costume that Mme. Lebrun had designed and carried out was finished in time and the Grand Duchess appeared at the ball in it, very pleased with herself, and expecting her dress to meet with general approbation.

The different Courts went separately to balls of this kind, so it happened that the Grand Duke Alexander and his wife had been at the ball some time before they met the Empress. The Grand Duchess Elizabeth went forward to kiss her hand, but the Empress stared at her without speaking, and did not hold it out, which took the Grand Duchess very much aback and distressed her. She soon guessed the possible reason for the Empress's severity, and regretted the facility with which she had allowed herself to be persuaded into paying her tribute to the folly of the moment. The next day the Empress told Count Saltykov that she had been displeased at the dress of the Grand

[1] Mme. Lebrun (Elisabeth Louise Vigée) spent six years in Russia, from 1795–1801, and painted a large number of portraits. 'Mme. Lebrun charges a thousand and two thousand roubles for a portrait which you would pay two guineas for in London.' (Rastoptchine to S. R. Vorontsov, St. Petersburg, 14 September 1795, *Archives Vorontsov*, viii. 113.) The rouble at that time was worth five francs, nominally, but there was a great loss in the exchange.

Duchess Elizabeth, and she continued for two or three days to treat her with great coldness.

The Empress had a very strong aversion to anything exaggerated or pretentious and gave evidence of this on all occasions, so that it is very natural she should have been pained to detect what appeared to be the proof of these two failings in the granddaughter whom she was so fond of, and whom in all respects she wished to see fitted to be an example to others.

The Duchess of Coburg did not win the Empress's affection; her Majesty rarely saw her privately, and at the end of three weeks the Grand Duke Constantine was urged to make his choice.

2

I think he would have preferred to be excused, for he had no wish to be married. But at last he decided in favour of Princess Julia. This poor young Princess did not seem very delighted at the fate that awaited her, and she was no sooner betrothed to the Grand Duke Constantine than she was exposed to rough behaviour and to manifestations of affection that were very much more like ill-treatment than love. A week or ten days after the Grand Duke Constantine's choice had been made the Duchess of Coburg and her two elder daughters left, so that their visit altogether did not last longer than from four to five weeks.

Princess Julia was placed under the guardianship of Mme. de Lieven, the governess in chief of the young Grand Duchesses. She took some of their lessons with them, and went out only with them; in a word, was treated with a severity to which she had not up to that time been accustomed. She found some consolation for the temporary discomfort she was enduring in the company of the Grand Duke Alexander and the Grand Duchess Elizabeth. The latter spent with her all the time that she could spare, and a very natural friendship sprang up between the two young

Princesses. The Grand Duke Constantine came to breakfast with his betrothed at ten o'clock in the morning in the heart of winter. He used to bring a drum and a trumpet, and made her play marches on the harpsichord, which he accompanied on these two noisy instruments. This was the only proof of affection that he gave her. Sometimes he twisted her arm and bit her, but these were only the preliminaries to what awaited her after marriage.

In January I appeared again at the Court and was presented to Princess Julia, whose marriage with the Grand Duke took place in February 1796, she being called the Grand Duchess Anne. On the wedding day there was a full-dress ball and the town was illuminated. She was taken to the Marble Palace, at a little distance from the castle, on the Nevsky Prospect, the Empress having lent this palace to the Grand Duke Constantine while the Chepielovsky Palace, adjoining the Winter Palace, was done up for him; but his behaviour, when he thought himself master in his own house, was proof enough of how badly he required strict supervision. Shortly after his marriage he used, amongst other things, to amuse himself with gun practice, in the riding school of the Marble Palace, with rats, which were loaded alive into the cannons, as ammunition. So, when the Empress went back to the Winter Palace, she gave him apartments near the Hermitage.

The Grand Duchess Anne, who was fourteen years old, had a very pretty face, but neither grace of movement nor education, and she had a romantic little head that was the more dangerous to her because she was totally lacking in knowledge and in principle. She had a kind heart and was naturally quick-witted, but, not possessing any virtues likely to safeguard her against temptations, she was surrounded by dangers on every side, while the atrocious behaviour of the Grand Duke Constantine contributed further to bewilder her ideas. The Grand Duchess Eliazbeth was certainly a companion whose influence was wholly for good, but circumstances and the daily more painful events of her life hardly permitted her to know her own mind.

I ought to have mentioned before the arrival at Court of the two Czartoryski brothers.[1] They were, unfortunately, too prominent and important for me to omit to include them in my 'Recollections.' Both came fairly often to my house. The elder is grave and taciturn, and his face is rather distinguished, serious, but lighted up by a pair of expressive eyes. It is the face of a man of strong passions. The younger is animated and impulsive and has much the French manner and appearance. The Grand Duke Alexander at once became very fond of them, and a few months after their arrival they were appointed gentlemen in waiting. The Empress took notice of them on account of their father, who was a man of note in his own country. Polish at heart, he was not by any means on our side, and her Majesty thought to win him over by showing favour to his children.

We went to Tsarskoie Sielo, where the Grand Duchesses became more and more drawn to each other. Their friendship, however, in no wise altered the affections of the Grand Duchess Elizabeth for me. On the contrary, she even wished her sister-in-law to be my friend, too, but that was impossible. The character of the Grand Duke Constantine was not such as to permit me to be on terms of intimacy with his wife, and the complete contrast that I could not fail to notice between her and my angelic Grand Duchess Elizabeth was not calculated to make me feel differently.

The Grand Duke Alexander grew daily more intimate with the Czartoryski Princes and young Count Stroganov,

[1] Adam and Constantine, sons of Prince Adam (General of the Estates of Podolia, founder of the celebrated royal residence of Pulawy, the 'Polish Athens,' as it was called) and of Isabelle Flemming. The elder, born in 1770, died in 1861, was Alexander's Minister of Foreign Affairs, the head of the insurgent Government of Poland in 1831, and finally, in exile, the guest of Paris, at the Hôtel Lambert, where he died. The younger was aide-de-camp to the Grand Duke Constantine, then Colonel, in the Polish army, of a regiment equipped at his own expense. He also died in exile, at Vienna, in 1860. The two brothers came to St. Petersburg to ask for the revocation of the sequestration order that had been placed on their father's estates.

the friend of the elder brother. He was always with them, and his friendship with them led him into undesirable entanglements. Prince Adam Czartoryski, pointedly encouraged by the evidences of affection that the Grand Duke evinced, and finding himself thus much thrown into the society of the Grand Duchess Elizabeth, became unable to control feelings that respect, high principles, and gratitude ought to have stifled at birth.

The Grand Duke and his Court moved on 12 June to the Alexandrovsky Palace, which the Empress had had built for her grandson. It was a very handsome building, with a large formal garden behind it joining on to the English garden of the Imperial residence. There was a flower-bed under the Grand Duchess's windows surrounded by an iron railing with a gate through which she entered her apartments. A few days before the removal the Empress had called me up to her (it was at one of the little Sunday balls).

'Oblige me,' said her Majesty, 'by telling your husband to have the furniture arranged in the Alexandrovsky Palace, for it is now quite ready, and I should like to see the Grand Duke and his Court settled in his own house. Choose for yourself the rooms that you prefer where you will be nearest to the Grand Duchess Elizabeth. I hope she is satisfied with me, for I am doing all that I can to please her, and I have given her the handsomest boy in my Empire.'

Her Majesty stopped for a moment, and then went on:

'You are constantly seeing them; tell me whether they really love one another, and if they are happy together.'

I replied absolutely truthfully that they seemed to be happy, for at that time they still were in so far as it was possible. The Empress laid her beautiful hand on mine and said to me with an emotion which quite overcame me:

'I know, madame, that you are not one to cause dissension between a husband and wife, I have seen

everything, and know more than people think, and for that reason my affection for you will last always.'

'Oh! madame,' I replied, 'what your Majesty has just said is inestimably precious to me, and I can swear to you that my whole life shall be spent in trying to deserve this good opinion, which is dearer to me than life itself.'

I kissed her hand; she rose, saying:

'I will leave you; we understand each other too well to make an exhibition of ourselves.'

Prince Alexis Kourakine[1] was standing opposite to us during this conversation. He came up to me and invited me to dance a polonaise.

'It is quite evident, cousin,' he said, 'that you are not in disfavour.'

I did not reply; I was so overcome that I hardly heard what he was saying. I passed on her Majesty's orders to my husband and he at once set to work to arrange things. Three days later we were in our new home.

I will venture to interpolate here one remark:

The vile tongue of calumny has convinced some minds always ready to believe evil that the Empress encouraged M. Zoubov's passion for the Grand Duchess Elizabeth, and that her grandson having no child, she was anxious for the Grand Duchess to present him with one, no matter by what means. The conversation which I have just quoted and which took place on 9 June 1796, seems to me sufficient to confound the horrible lie. I will further add that her Majesty herself spoke to M. Zoubov at the end of the year 1796 about his improper feelings for the Grand Duchess, and compelled him to alter his behaviour altogether. When we went back to Tsarskoie Sielo there were no more walks, and glances, and sighs. Countess Chouvalov was idle for a while. We used to call

[1] Alexis Borissovitch, born in 1759, died in 1829; the future Procurator-General under Paul I and Minister of the Interior under Alexander I. Like his brother, Prince Alexander, he was just at this time in disgrace, as being the nephew of Nikita Ivanovitch Panine, who himself died in the Imperial disfavour.

her ' L'Impresario in Angustia ' (' The Manager in Trouble '), which is the title of a comic opera by Cimarosa.

The Grand Duke and the Grand Duchess were very pleased with their palace. My apartments were over those of the Grand Duchess, and as the middle of the building projects in a semicircle she could speak to me if she stood at the last window before the angle. One afternoon we tried it for fun, she standing at her window and I at mine, and chatted for a long time, and while we talked the Grand Duke and my husband played the violin in my drawing-room. Everything was still harmonious.

The two Princes Czartoryski used to come to us every day, but in a few weeks things changed. The Grand Duke and his new friends became inseparable, the Grand Duchess Anne came every morning to fetch the Grand Duchess Elizabeth for a walk in the garden, and I used to go out with Mme. de Tolstoy, whose apartments were near mine. (That year she had permission to attend the Empress's evenings.) The Grand Duke grew colder to me every day, the Princes Czartoryski almost left off coming to see me, and the feelings of Prince Adam were a subject of general conversation, while his brother Constantine fell in love with the Grand Duchess Anne, and she in return took a fancy to him. This mixture of coquetry, romance, and error made the position of the Grand Duchess Elizabeth a painful and embarrassing one. She noticed the change in her husband, and was herself thrown every evening in her own house into the company of a man who evinced every sign of a passion that the Grand Duke seemed to encourage by thus giving him unlimited opportunities of seeing the Grand Duchess. Her sister-in-law confided to her the state of her heart and head, and when she tried to reprove her, and to save her from herself, the Grand Duchess Anne would cry and talk of her husband's tyranny until pity got the better of good sense.

Her Majesty announced one day to their Imperial Highnesses that she was coming in the afternoon to visit them in their new home, so an elegant and magnificent luncheon was laid in the colonnade, a sort of drawing-room

open on one side, with a double row of columns between it and the garden, and an extensive and beautiful view. Afterwards we went inside, and the Empress seated herself between the Grand Duchess and me.

'Grand Duchess,' she said, 'will you give your permission for these gentlemen to see your apartments?'

As it was Sunday there was a large company present; amongst others, the Vice-Chancellor, Count Ostermann, and Count Markov.[1] The Grand Duchess bowed, then gave me a look that told me plainly she was embarrassed, and stooping down behind the Empress, said: 'The book on the dressing-table!' I understood at once that I was to hide from the eyes of the company a volume of 'La Nouvelle Héloïse' which Countess Chouvalov had lent to the two Grand Duchesses; for the day before, the Grand Duchess Elizabeth had sent for me in the morning and we had had an interesting conversation in her boudoir, after which she had taken me into her dressing-room, where I found this book and took the liberty of making some remarks about it, to which she listened with her customary gentleness. So that I readily understood what she wanted, and without hesitation asked the Empress if I, as the wife of the doorkeeper, might do the honours of the Grand Duchess's apartments to the gentlemen. Her Majesty consented, so I started off like a flash, got ahead of the company, and hid the book. That evening at supper I had the pleasure of hearing the Grand Duchess read out a passage in a letter from her mother, who sent me the kindest messages.

Every day seemed to bring new dangers, and I suffered keenly from all those to which the Grand Duchess was exposed. As I lived above her I saw her go out and come in, as also the Grand Duke, who practically every evening brought in Adam Czartoryski to supper, and God alone knew all that I endured. One day when I was more uneasy than usual at what was happening before my eyes, I went into my rooms after the Empress's evening, changed

[1] Arcadius Ivanovitch, then French correspondence secretary to Prince Bezborodko and confidential agent of Plato Zoubov (1747–1827).

my dress, and sat down on the ledge of my window, which was just above the Grand Duchess's. By stretching my head out as far as I could, I could just catch sight of a corner of the Grand Duchess's white dress in the gleam of the moonlight, which was shining full upon our windows. I had seen the Grand Duke and his friend come in, so, supposing that the Grand Duchess was alone in her boudoir, I flung a fichu over my shoulders, went down into the garden and up to the railings of her flower-garden, and there I saw her alone and deep in her own melancholy reflections.

'Are you alone, madame ?' I said.

'I would rather be alone,' she said, 'than sup with Prince Czartoryski. The Grand Duke went to sleep on the couch, so I slipped away to my own room, and here I am with my own thoughts; they are not cheerful ones, I can assure you.'

I was suffering torments at being so near to her, with every right to stay with her, and yet unable to go into her room. We chatted for quite a quarter of an hour, and then I left her and went back to my window.

I was becoming a perfect bugbear to the Grand Duke, for he knew what my feelings were, and was quite sure that I should not approve of his. Prince Czartoryski was delighted to see the constant obstacles that the Grand Duke placed in the way of my association with the Grand Duchess, for he was well aware that I was not likely to help him in his projects, and he tried his utmost to bring about a rupture between me and the Grand Duke. My husband took the liberty of remonstrating with the latter about his conduct, pointing out how he was injuring his wife's reputation, but that only irritated him the more against me, so I made up my mind to say nothing and to suffer in silence.

One morning I was at the harpsichord with Mme. de Tolstoy when I heard the door open softly and the Grand Duchess simply flew into the room, took me by the hand, pulled me into my bedroom, locked the door, and, flinging herself into my arms, burst into tears. I will not try to express all that I thought and felt. She was just going to speak

when there was a knock at the door, and a message came that my mother had just come in from the country to see me. The Grand Duchess was very distressed at the interruption, and uttered one short sentence that I shall never forget. Then she dried her eyes, went into the drawing-room, and was as delightful as possible to my mother, poured out tea for her and looked and acted precisely as if she had come in on purpose to do her the honours at breakfast; such was, even at that time, the angelic character of this Princess. In spite of her youth her thoughtfulness made her sweetly hide her own feelings whenever they were likely to embarrass others, and her kindness was always her predominant characteristic.

That summer a new arrival, Princess Radziwill, a Polish lady, came amongst us. The Empress received her very kindly, though she did not grant her anything that she asked, modest though her requirements were: she merely wished to have the guardianship of a young Prince Radziwill, over whom she had no rights at all, in order to possess herself of his fortune, and to receive the Empress's portrait, that is to say, be made lady-in-waiting. Although she was over fifty years of age she still retained much of her youthful freshness. An enthusiastic admirer of the arts, she talked about them in a very original manner; she was amusing in society, and had an appearance of geniality that made one feel perfectly at ease with her. She was servile and vulgar at Court, but she flavoured her conversation and her manners with an originality which made them less repellent than they would have seemed in anyone else. I will not discuss her behaviour, which is only too well known, for she had thrown off absolutely all sense of propriety. She used to say of her husband that he was like an ostrich, hatching other birds' eggs. The Empress was sometimes amused at her sallies and her enthusiasm, but she often grew tired of her servility. I remember one day on the colonnade she carried her cringing so far that her Majesty was disgusted, and even gave her, indirectly, a lesson. She had a little English lapdog that the Princess of Nassau had given her,

a pretty little creature, but grovelling and jealous of the other dogs. Her name was *Pani*, which is a Polish word, meaning madame.

'Listen to me, *Pani*,' said the Empress; 'you know that I always push you away when you cringe; I do not like servility.'

Princess Radziwill had one of her daughters with her,[1] a charming girl, unlike her mother in every respect, and good sense and sweetness itself. She often winced at her mother's extravagant behaviour. Her Majesty gave her the monogram of the maids of honour, and made her two brothers gentlemen-in-waiting. She was very delicate, and died at St. Petersburg after a short illness, her death occurring a few days only after that of the Empress. In her delirium she kept calling out that the Empress had come to fetch her. I hastened to call on her mother, thinking I should find her heart-broken; but she was in no need of the compassion and sympathy I was ready to offer her, and my only regret remained that I should never again see Christine, who deserved to have had a better mother.

3

On 25 June I was awakened at five o'clock in the morning by the sound of cannon announcing the birth of a son to the Grand Duchess Marie. The child was called Nicholas (the future Emperor Nicholas I) and was born at Tsarskoie Sielo. The Empress sat up with the Grand Duchess all night, overjoyed at having another grandson. He was baptised a week later, and his brother, the Grand Duke Alexander, was his godfather.

An incident occurred shortly afterwards which very much upset her Majesty. At one of the Sunday balls Mme. de Lieven, the governess of the young Grand Duchesses, asked permission to speak to the Empress, and told her of an assault that the Grand Duke Constantine had committed

[1] Christine.

on a Hussar, whom he had horribly maltreated. Such cruelty on his part was quite news to the Empress, who at once sent her confidential valet to find out all that he could about the matter. On his return he confirmed all that Mme. de Lieven had said, and her Majesty was so affected by the account that it made her ill.

I heard afterwards that when she retired she had a kind of apoplectic seizure. She wrote to the Grand Duke Paul, informing him of what had taken place and begging him to punish his son, which he did very severely, but not in the manner he ought to have done. Then the Empress had him put under arrest.

The following Sunday the Empress commanded the Grand Duke Alexander to give the usual ball at his residence, as she still did not feel well, but I thought it a very sad affair, for I was uneasy about the Empress's indisposition. My sad presentiments, unfortunately, proved only too well founded. The Grand Duke Constantine had not allowed the Grand Duchess Anne to leave home, so she was fetched, but had hardly been at the ball half an hour when he sent for her back. She left on the verge of tears.

New projects and fresh hopes began to occupy people's minds, and there were rumours of a marriage between the Grand Duchess Alexandrine[1] and the King of Sweden.[2]

One evening the Empress said to me :

' Do you know, I am very much concerned about settling my granddaughter Alexandrine. I am thinking of marrying her to Count Cheremetiev.'[3]

' So I have heard, madame,' I replied ; ' but it is said that his family object.'

[1] The daughter of the Grand Duke Paul, born 29 July 1783, died in 1801, after her marriage with the Archduke Joseph, Palatine of Hungary.

[2] Gustavus Adolphus IV.

[3] Count Nicholas Petrovitch, born in 1751, died in 1809; later acting Privy Councillor, Grand Chamberlain, and head of the Cadet Corps, one of the richest men of his day. He was already forty-five at this time, and later on married one of his serfs, who had become an actress, Prascovia Ivanovna Kovalevskaïa. After her death in 1803 he founded a charitable institute at Moscow in memory of her.

The reply amused her very much.

Although her Majesty seemed to have entirely recovered, she complained of her legs. One Sunday, between Mass and dinner, she took my arm and led me to a window overlooking the garden.

'I am going to build an arch here,' she said, 'that I shall join on to the colonnade drawing-rooms, and over it I shall put a chapel, to save me the long walk that I have to take to hear Mass. When I get into the gallery I have not strength to stand. If I were to die, I am sure that it would grieve you very much.'

These words from the Empress's lips gave me an indescribable shock, and the tears streamed down my cheeks. Her Majesty added:

'You love me, I know; I love you, too; control yourself.'

She left me very soon, being greatly overcome, but I stayed where I was, my face pressed to the window-pane, trying to check my sobs.

The days seemed to me to fly; I regretted more than ever leaving Tsarskoie Sielo. In my heart I heard a voice saying:

'*You have spent your last summer here.*' A few days before we left, the Grand Duchess asked me to send her a farewell letter, an idea of hers which I have never been able to fathom and which made me feel still more gloomy. Everything seemed to presage a painful issue of events. I obeyed, and she sent me one back, which I still have.

We went back to town, and the arrival of the King of Sweden was spoken about openly. Festivities and rejoicings were looked forward to, but instead there came a funeral and tears.

The King arrived soon after the return of the Court to town, travelling as the Count de Haga, and stayed with the Baron de Steding, his Ambassador. His first interview with the Empress was very interesting, and she found him all that she had expected. We were presented to the King at the Hermitage. Their Majesties' entry into the

drawing-room was most striking. They held each other by the hand, the dignity and noble appearance of the Empress not in the least throwing into the shade the fine bearing of the young King, whose black Swedish coat, and long hair, reaching to his shoulders, gave something chivalric to the nobility of his appearance. We were all very favourably impressed.

The Duke of Sudermania,[1] the King's uncle, was anything but imposing-looking. He is about as high as the table, with merry, squinting eyes, a pursed-up mouth, a little pointed stomach all on one side, and legs like toothpicks. His movements are quick and fussy and he always appears to act on the spur of the moment. He took a fancy to me and paid me very assiduous court wherever he met me, at which attentions the Empress was much amused. One evening at the Hermitage when he was talking more nonsense than usual, she called me to her and said, with a laugh :

'We are only supposed to believe half of what we hear, but with your lover you must only believe a quarter.'

The Court was at Taurida Palace, and to give variety to the evenings we had a little ball for the company who frequented the Hermitage. We assembled in the drawing-room, and the Empress appeared and came and sat down by my side. We talked for a time, waiting for the King to open the ball.

'I think it will be better to begin the dancing,' her Majesty said. 'When the King arrives he will be less embarrassed to find it going on than to see this circle of ladies and gentlemen looking as if they were waiting for him to come in. I will tell them to play a polonaise.'

'Do you wish me to give the order, madame ? ' I asked.

'No,' she replied ; 'I will beckon to the Page of the Chambers.'

[1] Regent of the kingdom until 1797. 'His uncle looks like a charlatan. To great petulance of mind he adds the manners of Punchinello, which give him the appearance of an old scamp.' (Rastoptchine to S. R. Vorontsov, 1 September 1796, *Archives Vorontsov*, viii. 143.)

She did so, but the Page of the Chambers did not see, and Count Ostermann, the Vice-Chancellor, took the signal as meant for him. The old man hurried up as quickly as he could with his long cane to the Empress, and she rose and walked with him to the window, where she conversed with him very gravely for about five minutes. Then she came back to me, asking me if I approved of what she had done.

'I wish all the ladies in St. Petersburg could come and take lessons from your Majesty,' said I, 'and learn to treat their guests with the same consideration.'

'But what else could I do?' she replied. 'I should have hurt the poor old man's feelings if I had pointed out to him that he had made a mistake. Instead of that, by talking to him about a few unimportant matters, I convinced him that I really did call him. He is pleased, you are pleased, and I too, as a consequence.'[1]

The King appeared and the Empress was gracious and attentive to him, while maintaining a perfectly reserved and dignified composure. Their Majesties watched each other closely and tried each to read the other. A few days passed and the King mentioned his wish for an alliance. The Empress replied very guardedly in terms that reserved her the right of negotiating the principal conditions before committing herself. Conferences and discussions followed one after the other, and the coming and going of the Ministers and contracting parties grew so frequent as to excite the curiosity of Court and town.

There was a full-dress ball in the large gallery of the Winter Palace while the King was still not informed of the state of the Grand Duchess Alexandrine's feelings towards him. Two days later, at a grand entertainment given at the Taurida Palace, I was sitting by the Empress's side and the King was standing in front of us, when Princess Radziwill brought up to her Majesty a locket containing a portrait of the King in wax, the work of a well-known

[1] Although occupying the highest rank in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs since 1783, Ostermann really left the management of this department to the secretary of the Empress's Cabinet, Bezborodko.

painter named Tonci, who had done it from memory after having only seen the King at the ball in the gallery.

'It is a very good likeness,' said the Empress, 'but I think the Count de Haga looks sad.'

The King struck in, vivaciously:

'That is because I was very unhappy until yesterday.'

The Grand Duchess's favourable reply had only been announced to him that same morning.

We moved to the Winter Palace. All the grandees of Court and town were commanded to give balls, and the first was at the house of Count Samoïlov, the Procurator-General.[1] The weather was still fine and several Russian and Swedish lords were standing on the balcony waiting for the arrival of the Empress, when, just as her carriage appeared, a meteor was seen to shoot up and disappear over the fortress. This phenomenon occasioned many superstitious conjectures.

Her Majesty entered the room where the King already was and the ball commenced. After the first dances the Empress retired into her private room with the King, allowing a few of the members of her private circle to accompany her. It was then that their Majesties had their first conference about the marriage, and the Empress gave the King a paper which she asked him to read at home. I was in the ballroom, but her Majesty sent for me, and commanded me to sit down near a table and do the honours to such of the gentlemen as were not playing cards. Soon afterwards she went back into the ballroom with the King. A very grand supper was served, but the Empress did not sit down at the table, and retired early.

Count Stroganov also gave a ball, which the Empress honoured by her presence. The arrangements with regard to the marriage were progressing most favourably, which made her Majesty very gay and still more amiable than usual. She ordered me to sit opposite to the lovers at

[1] Alexander Nikolaievitch, Procurator-General of the Senate since 1792; raised to this post because he was Potemkine's nephew, and created a Count in 1795. He left a biography of his uncle.

supper, so that I could tell her afterwards of their little coquetries.

The King was very much taken up with the Grand Duchess Alexandrine and they talked incessantly. When supper was over the Empress called me and asked me what I had noticed. I told her that Mme. de Lieven's care was quite thrown away, for the Grand Duchess was past praying for and that it was painful to watch her ; that the King had neither eaten nor drunk, but had satisfied his hunger through his eyes, which nonsense much amused the Empress.

She was holding a fan that day, a thing that I had never seen before, and she held it so strangely that I could not help looking at her. She noticed this, and said to me :

' I really think you are laughing at me.'

' I confess to your Majesty,' I replied, ' that I have never seen a fan held so awkwardly.'

' It is true,' she said, ' that I look a little like Ninette at Court, but I am a very ancient Ninette.' [1]

' That hand,' I said, ' was not made for trifling ; it holds the fan as if it were a sceptre.'

There were also entertainments given by the Austrian Ambassador, Count de Cobenzl ; and by Count Ostermann, the Vice-Chancellor.

I will here append copies of some papers written with the Empress's own hand, and another written by the King of Sweden. They were given to me soon after the death of Catherine II.

' On 24 August, the King of Sweden, sitting with me on a bench in the Taurida Palace garden, asked me for Alexandrine's hand. I told him that he could neither ask me for her, nor could I listen, since he had entered into a contract with the Princess of Mecklenburg. He assured me that it was broken off. I then told him that I would think about it. He begged me to sound my granddaughter and ascertain whether she had any objection to him, which I promised to do, and told him that I would give him an

[1] *Ninette à la Cour*, a comedy in two acts, by Favart, played at the Comédie Italienne in 1755.

answer in three days. And indeed, in three days, after having spoken to the father, mother, and the young lady herself, at Count Stroganov's ball I told the Count de Haga that I would consent to the marriage on two conditions: the first, that the Mecklenburg negotiations were definitely broken off, and the second, that Alexandrine should continue in the religion in which she had been born and brought up. With regard to the first point, he said that there could be no doubt on the subject; with regard to the second, he did his utmost to persuade me that it was impossible, and we parted, both of us continuing to hold to our own opinion.

'This first stubbornness on his part lasted ten days, and all the Swedish Excellencies were not of the King's opinion. At last, I do not know how, they succeeded in overruling him, and at the Ambassador's ball he came and told me that his scruples on the religious question had been removed. So that everything seemed to have been settled. In the meantime I had drawn up paper No. 1, and as I had it in my pocket, gave it to him, saying: "Please read this carefully; it will confirm you in the good dispositions in which I find you." The next day, at the fireworks, he thanked me for my paper, and told me that he was only sorry I did not know all that was in his heart. At the ball at the Taurida Palace the King of Sweden himself proposed to the girl's mother to exchange rings and for the betrothal to take place. She told me of it, I spoke to the Regent, and we appointed the Thursday for the ceremony. It was agreed that it should take place within closed doors, according to the rites of the Greek Church.

'In the meantime the treaty was being drawn up between the Ministers. The article concerning the free practice of religion formed part of it. It was to be signed with the remainder of the treaty on the Thursday. When it was read out to the plenipotentiaries, this article was found not to be included. Our people asked the Swedes what they had done with it, and they replied that the King had kept it with him to discuss with me. The account of this incident was brought to me, it being then five o'clock in the

evening, whereas the betrothal was to take place at six o'clock. I sent to the King at once to know what he wished to say to me with regard to the matter, for I should not be seeing him before the betrothal and afterwards it would be too late to withdraw. He sent me back a verbal reply to the effect that he would talk to me about it.

'Not being by any means satisfied with this reply, to cut the matter short, I dictated paper No. 2 to Count Markov, so that if the King would sign this assurance I could still allow the betrothal to take place that evening. It was seven o'clock when this proposal was sent off; at nine o'clock Count Markov returned with paper No. 3, written by the King's own hand and signed by him, the terms of which, instead of being clear and precise, like those I had proposed, were vague and obscure. Then I sent word that I was ill. The rest of the time that they were here was spent in coming and going. The Regent signed and ratified the treaty, as it ought to be. The King is to ratify it in two months, after he has attained his majority. He has sent to consult his Consistory.[1]

'No. 1.—Copy of the paper written by her Imperial Majesty and handed by her in person to the King of Sweden.

'"Do you agreee with me, my dear brother, that it is not only to the interest of your kingdom, but also to your personal interest to contract the marriage that you have told me you wish for?

'"If your Majesty agrees to this, and is convinced of it, why should religion place any difficulty in the way of your wishes?

'"Allow me to tell you that the bishops themselves see

[1] As M. Choumigorski has pointed out in the Russian edition of the *Recollections*, p. 83–4, this note differs in a few certainly trifling details from that which Catherine sent to her Ambassador at Stockholm, Baron Budberg, and which was published in the *Recueil de la Soc. d'Hist. russe* (ix. 316 and after). Doubtless it was destined for use elsewhere, or else, being shorter, was intended as a preliminary proposal. The annexed documents are identical here and in the other case.

no objection to your wish, and are eager to remove any scruples you may have with regard to the matter.

'"Your Majesty's uncle, your Ministers, and all those who, by virtue of their long services, their attachment and fidelity to your person, have most claim to be believed, agree in declaring that they see in this article nothing contrary to conscience or prejudicial to the tranquillity of your reign.

'"Our peoples, far from blaming your choice, will applaud it with rapture and will continue to bless and adore you, because they will owe to you a certain pledge of their prosperity and their public and private peace.

'"This same choice, I venture to say, will prove the excellence of your judgment and discernment and will contribute to increase your people's goodwill towards you.

'"In bestowing upon you the hand of my granddaughter, I am privately convinced that I am making you the most precious gift in my power, and the gift which will best convince you of the reality and extent of my affection and friendship for you. But, in God's name, do not mar her happiness and your own by dragging in questions which are quite irrelevant to the point at issue, and with regard to which it will be wise for you to impose a discreet silence on yourself and others, or you will prepare the way for never-ending sorrows, intrigues and outcries.

'"By the maternal affection which you know me to feel for my granddaughter, you may judge of my solicitude for her happiness. I cannot fail to perceive that this will be inseparably bound up with yours so soon as she is united with you in the bonds of marriage. Could I ever consent to the solemnisation of these bonds if I foresaw the slightest danger or inconvenience for your Majesty therein, and if, on the contrary, I did not foresee all that is likely to insure your happiness and my granddaughter's ?

'"To so many combined authorities, which ought to have an influence upon your Majesty's decision, I will add one more, the weight of which has more claim upon your

consideration. The project of this marriage was conceived and encouraged by the late King, your father, of glorious memory.[1] I will not adduce, in support of this assertion, the evidence either of men of your own nation or of mine, although there are many of them, but I will quote the French princes and the noblemen of their suite, whose testimony is the less open to suspicion because they are neutral in the matter.

'"Happening to meet the late King at Spa, they often heard him allude to this project, as one of those which he seemed to have most at heart, and the accomplishment of which seemed to him most likely to cement harmony and a good understanding between the two houses and the two States.

'"Now, if this project is the conception of the late King, your father, how could this prince, as enlightened as he was full of affection for his son, have thought that it could, either sooner or later, injure your Majesty in the estimation of your people, or alienate the affections of your subjects? That this same project was the result of long and profound reflection on his part, all his actions only too clearly prove. He had no sooner consolidated the authority in his own hands than he laid before the Diet a solemn decree of universal religious tolerance, so as to dissipate for ever all the gloom that had arisen from centuries of fanaticism and ignorance, which it would be neither wise nor glorious to revive at the present time. At the Diet of Gefle he revealed his intentions still more clearly by deliberating and deciding with the most trusty of his subjects that, in the event of the marriage of his son and successor, the consideration of the splendour of the house with which he allied himself was to be the prime consideration, and difference of religion was to be no obstacle.

'"Shall I repeat here an incident that occurred at this same Diet of Gefle which has come to my knowledge and for

[1] Gustavus III, assassinated on 16 March 1792, at Stockholm, where he had just arrived after a long visit to Aix-les-Bains and the neighbourhood. At the time in negotiation with the French princes, he had hoped to assume the command of the anti-revolutionary coalition.

the truth of which everybody will vouch to your Majesty? When the amount of the contribution to be paid by your subjects at the time of your marriage was being fixed, these words had been inserted in the Act drawn up to determine the matter: *on the marriage of the Crown Prince with a Lutheran princess.* The bishops, on hearing the draft of this Act read, of their own initiative deleted the words *with a Lutheran princess.*

'"In conclusion, deign to have some confidence in the experience of a reign of thirty years, during which I have succeeded in the greater number of my enterprises. It is this experience, combined with the sincerest friendship, which ventures to offer you true and honest counsel, with no other end in view than the desire to see you enjoy a happy future.

'"This is my last word:

'"It is not fitting for a princess of Russia to change her religion.

'"The daughter of the Emperor Peter I married Duke Charles Frederick of Holstein, son of the elder sister of King Charles XII, but she did not on that account change her religion.

'"Her son's rights of succession to the throne of Sweden were none the less recognised by the States, who sent a solemn embassy to Russia to offer him the crown. But the Empress Elizabeth had already declared this son of her sister Grand Duke of Russia and her heir presumptive.[1]

'"So it was agreed by the preliminaries of the Treaty of Abo[2] that your Majesty's grandfather should be elected successor to the throne of Sweden, which provision was carried into effect. So that it was two Russian princesses who bore to the throne the line from which your Majesty is descended, and who opened to the brilliant qualities of which you show promise the possibilities of a reign that will never be too prosperous nor too fair to please me.

[1] This was the Emperor Peter III, husband of Catherine II, and the founder of the Holstein-Gottorp-Romanov dynasty, which is reigning in Russia at the present time.

[2] Signed in 1743 between Russia and Sweden.

'"Let me add frankly that it is indispensably necessary for your Majesty to rise superior to the obstacles and scruples which every reason combines to set aside, and which can only injure your happiness and that of your kingdom.

'"I will go further; my personal friendship for you, which has been unswerving from your birth, points out to you that time presses and that if you do not come to a decision during the moments, so precious to me, that you are here, the matter may fall through altogether as the result of a thousand obstacles which will crop up again as soon as you are gone, and that, on the other hand, if, in spite of the solid and irrefutable reasons which have been laid before you, both by me and by all those who are best deserving of your confidence, religion should prove an invincible obstacle to the engagements you appeared to wish for a week ago, you may be persuaded that from that time forth there will never again be any question of this marriage, desirable though it may be to the affection which I feel for you and for my granddaughter.

'"I call upon your Majesty to reflect thoughtfully upon what I have just been laying before you, praying God, who directs the hearts of kings, to enlighten yours and to inspire in you a resolve in conformity with the good of your people and your personal happiness."

'No. 2.—Draft.

'"I promise solemnly to allow her Imperial Highness the Grand Duchess Alexandrine Pavlovna, my future wife and Queen of Sweden, entire liberty of conscience and freedom to practise the religion in which she was born and brought up, and I beg your Imperial Majesty to regard this promise as the most binding contract that I can enter into."

'No. 3.

'"Having already given my word of honour to your Imperial Majesty that the Grand Duchess Alexandrine shall

never be constrained in her conscience as far as religion is concerned, and your Majesty having appeared satisfied with this assurance, I am convinced you do not doubt my knowing sufficiently well the sacred laws that this promise imposes upon me for any other document to be altogether superfluous.

' " (Signed) GUSTAVUS ADOLPHUS.

' " This 11th–22nd day of September 1796." '

Count Markov told me that the Empress was so distressed at the King's behaviour, that on receipt of his second reply she presented all the appearance of having had a paralytic stroke.

The next day was a gala day and a full-dress ball was commanded in the White Gallery. The King of Sweden appeared sad and embarrassed, but the Empress was perfectly composed and talked to him with all the ease and dignity possible. The Grand Duke Paul was furious, and cast withering glances at the King, who left a few days later.

The Grand Duke Alexander gave a ball. Everyone present was in mourning for the Queen of Portugal, even the Empress being in black, a thing which I think I had never seen before, for she never wore anything but half-mourning, except on very special occasions. Her Majesty sat down by me, and I was profoundly uneasy to notice how pale and worn-out she looked.

' Do you not think,' she said, ' that this ball looks more like a German funeral than a joyous entertainment? That is the effect these black dresses and white gloves produce on me.'

The ballroom has two tiers of windows overlooking the Embankment.

We were standing at one of the windows and the moon had risen, noticing which, the Empress said to me:

' The moon is very fine to-night and deserves to be looked at through Herschel's telescope. I have promised the King of Sweden to show it to him when he comes again.'

Her Majesty reminded me in this connection of Koulibine's famous reply about the moon. Koulibine was a peasant, but a born scientist, who had gained admission to the Academy through his remarkable genius and the very ingenious machines that he had invented. When the King of England sent the Empress Herschel's telescope, she had it taken to Tsarskoie Sielo under the charge of a German professor and the above-mentioned Koulibine, and there it was placed in the drawing-room and the moon was examined. I was standing behind her Majesty's chair when she asked the professor whether he had made any fresh discoveries by means of the telescope.

'There is no doubt,' he said, 'that the moon is inhabited; I can see a country intersected by valleys, and I can discern piles of timber.'

The Empress listened with imperturbable gravity, and when he had moved away, called Koulibine and asked him in a low voice:

'And you, Koulibine, have you discovered anything?'

'I am not so learned as the professor, madame; I saw nothing at all.'

The Empress was much amused by the reply, which she often quoted.

Supper was announced. Her Majesty, who never took supper, walked about the rooms and afterwards came and stood behind our chairs. I was sitting by Mme. de Tolstoy, and she, having finished, held out her plate, without turning her head, when she was very much astonished to see it taken by a beautiful hand, wearing a superb solitaire ring. She uttered a cry as she recognised the Empress, who said:

'You are surely not afraid of me?'

'I am ashamed, madame,' replied the Countess, 'at having allowed your Majesty to take my plate.'

'I came to talk to you, ladies,' replied the Empress.

Afterwards she joked with us about the powder which was falling from our hair on our shoulders and told us that Count Matuchkine, a very ridiculous personage, had his back powdered when he came back from Paris, declaring that

that was a fashion adopted by all the most elegant people in Paris.

'And now I must leave you, fair ladies,' added the Empress; 'I am very tired.'

She moved away, laying on my shoulder a hand that I kissed for the last time with an unconquerable feeling of uneasiness and sadness. I followed her with my eyes as far as the door, and when I could no longer see her my heart was beating to suffocation. I went home, but could not sleep, and the next morning I went to my mother and as I told her what I suspected about the Empress's health, burst into tears. She tried to reassure me, but in vain—I was like a condemned prisoner, waiting for the end.

PART II

THE REIGN OF PAUL I

CHAPTER V

1796—1797

1. The death of the Empress—Her last moments—New faces at Court—The *Gatchinese*. 2. The accession of Paul I—The character of the new sovereign—Changes—Lugubrious dawn of a new reign—A double funeral: Peter III and Catherine II—The Terror—The Tremblers. 3. Count Golovine is appointed Grand Master of the Court of the Grand Duke Alexander—The new Court—A favourite: Mlle de Nelidov—The new etiquette—The trials of the Grand Duchess Elizabeth. 4. The Emperor's new circle—The King of Poland—Journey to Moscow—The castle of Petrovski—A diplomatic marriage.

I

Some presentiments are stronger than our reason. Even if we say to ourselves that we must take no notice of them, we are none the less disturbed by them, and we cannot dismiss them from our thoughts. They pursue us like a shadow, alarm us, and are constantly before our eyes.

A very few days later, at ten o'clock in the morning, while my mother was taking breakfast, a Court lackey, in attendance on my uncle, came in and asked my mother's permission to wake him. 'The Empress had an apoplectic fit about an hour ago,' he said. I uttered a frightful cry and hurried to tell my husband, who was downstairs in his own rooms. I had the utmost difficulty in getting down the

stairs, for I was trembling all over, and could hardly put one foot before the other.

When I entered my husband's room, I had to force myself to utter the fatal words : *The Empress is dying.*

My husband was dumbfounded. Then he asked for his things so that he could go as quickly as possible to the castle. I could neither cry nor speak, still less think. M. Tarsoukov, the nephew of the Empress's head waiting-woman, came in, and said to me in Russian :

' All is at an end, she and our happiness.'

Then Count and Countess Tolstoy arrived, and the latter remained with me while her husband went to the castle with my husband. We spent, until three o'clock in the morning, the most wretched hours of my life. Every two hours my husband sent me a little note, and at one time our hopes revived a little, but only momentarily. The Empress lay for thirty-six hours in an apoplectic fit, her body alive, but her mind dead, and on 6 November she ceased to breathe.

I will insert here the detailed account of her last days and of the events which took place in the palace the first few hours after her end. They were reported to me by the same person whom I have already quoted.

The Empress's disappointment over the non-success of her projects with regard to the King of Sweden had reacted upon her in a manner that was very apparent to all those immediately round her. She changed her whole mode of life, seldom appearing, except on Sundays, for Mass and dinner, and very rarely admitted her circle into the Diamond-room or to the Hermitage at all. She spent almost every evening in her bedroom, to which no one was ever admitted, except the few persons whom she honoured by her special intimacy. The Grand Duke Alexander and his wife, who usually spent all their evenings with the Empress, only saw her once or twice during the week, with the exception of Sundays. They often received commands to remain at home and often, too, she persuaded them to go to the town theatre to see the new Italian opera.

On Sunday, 2 November, the Empress appeared in public for the last time, almost as if to bid farewell to her subjects. Everybody was struck, after the event, by the impression she produced that day. Although the public assemble every Sunday in the Knights Guards' Hall and the Court in the attendants' room at the side, the Empress rarely came out through the Guard-room. Usually, she went straight from the attendants' room, through the dining-room, into the chapel; or else sent the Grand Duke, her son, or her grandson, when his father was not present, and heard Mass from the entresol, an inner room, a window of which looked down into the chapel.

On 2 November the Empress went to Mass through the Guard-room. She was in mourning for the Queen of Portugal, and looked better than she had done for a long time. After Mass she held a lengthy reception; Mme. Lebrun had just completed a full-length portrait of the Grand Duchess Elizabeth, which she presented to the Empress that day, and her Majesty had it placed in the Throne-room, and stopped a long time in front of it, examining it and criticising it with the persons invited to dine with her. There was a large table, as was usual on Sundays, and the Grand Dukes Alexander and Constantine and their wives dined with her.

This was not only the last dinner she had with them, but it was the last time she saw them, and they received commands not to go in to her in the evening. On Monday the 3rd and on Tuesday the 4th the Grand Duke Alexander and the Grand Duchess Elizabeth were at the opera. On Wednesday the 5th, at eleven o'clock in the morning, when the Grand Duke Alexander had gone out for a walk with one of the Princes Czartoryski, Count Saltykov sent word to the Grand Duchess to ask where he was, and begged her to tell him whether she was aware at what time he would be in. But she did not know. Shortly afterwards the Grand Duke came in, very much upset at the message from Count Saltykov, who had sent after him into every corner of St. Petersburg. He had already been told that the Empress

was ill, and that Count Nicholas Zoubov had been sent to Gatchina.[1]

He was thunderstruck, and the Grand Duchess no less than he, at the news, and they spent the day in a state of unspeakable anxiety. At five o'clock in the evening the Grand Duke Alexander, who had with difficulty restrained himself so long, obtained permission from Count Saltykov to enter the Empress's apartments. This consolation had at first been refused him, for no good reason, though for motives readily apprehended by anyone who was acquainted with Count Saltykov. When the Empress was alive it had been rumoured that she intended to debar her son from the succession and to appoint the Grand Duke Alexander her heir. Never, I am sure, did such a thought even occur to the Empress,[2] but its having been mentioned was sufficient to make Count Saltykov prohibit the Grand Duke Alexander from entering his grandmother's apartments before his father's arrival. As the Grand Duke Paul could not, however, be much longer in arriving, the Grand Duke Alexander and the Grand Duchess Elizabeth came to the Empress's apartments between five and six in the evening, the only persons they then encountered in the outer rooms being a few servants with sorrowful faces.

The persons waiting in the Empress's dressing-room were a picture of concentrated despair. At last they were admitted, and saw the Empress lying unconscious on the ground, on a mattress with a screen round it. She was in her bedroom, which was only very dimly lighted, and at her feet were Mlle. Protassov, the first lady-in-waiting, and Mlle. Alexeiev, one of the principal waiting-women, the sound of whose sobs mingled with the Empress's frightful death rattle, and alone broke the profound silence.

The Grand Duke Alexander and his wife did not remain

[1] The brother of the favourite. When Paul saw him arrive, he thought it was to put him under arrest on account of his understanding with Prussia and his general behaviour, which, on the whole, was opposed to the Empress's wishes.

[2] The opposite is now proved to be the case.

long, for they were very much overcome, but passed on through the Empress's rooms. The Grand Duke's kind heart prompted him to go to Prince Zoubov, whose rooms adjoined those of the Empress, and as the same corridor led to the apartments of the Grand Duke Constantine, the Grand Duchess Elizabeth went to see her sister-in-law. They were not able to remain together long, for they had to prepare to receive the Grand Duke, their father, who arrived at about seven o'clock, and, without calling at his own palace, took up his abode with the Grand Duchess in the Empress's apartments. He only saw his sons ; his daughters-in-law were commanded to remain at home.

The Empress's apartments filled up at once with servants devoted to the Grand Duke Paul, for the most part persons of obscure origin, to whom neither their talents nor their birth gave any right to aspire to the places and favours that in imagination they already saw being showered upon them. The crowd in the ante-rooms grew from moment to moment. The *Gatchinese* (as the persons I have just alluded to were called) ran about and knocked up against the courtiers, who asked each other in amazement who these Ostrogoths could be, who alone had the right of entry to the inner rooms, whereas formerly they had never been seen even in the ante-rooms.

The Grand Duke Paul had installed himself in a small room beyond his mother's bedroom, so that all those to whom he gave orders had to pass the Empress, who was still breathing, as if she no longer lived. This profanation of sovereign Majesty, this irreligion—for it would have been the same in the case of the humblest human being—shocked everyone, and showed up the character of the Grand Duke Paul, who authorised it, in a very unfavourable light. Thus the night passed : there was a moment's hope once, for the remedies seemed to be taking effect, but this hope was soon extinguished. The Grand Duchess Elizabeth spent the night fully dressed, waiting, expecting every moment to be sent for. Countess Chouvalov went backwards and forwards, bringing news of the Empress's condition. The Grand

Duke Alexander had not returned home since his father's arrival, but towards three o'clock in the morning they both came in to see the Grand Duchess Elizabeth. A new uniform had already been ordered, that of the battalions of the Grand Duke Paul, which became the models after which the whole army was reorganised.[1] Very trivial incidents sometimes bring about greater results than others that are more important in themselves. The sight of these uniforms—forbidden outside the limits of Pavlovsk and Gatchina, and which the Grand Duchess had never seen her husband put on, except privately, because the Empress did not like her grandsons to take the Prussian army, with its undue attention to petty details, as a model—the sight, I say, of these uniforms, that the Grand Duchess had made fun of a thousand times, destroyed in a moment the illusion that she was trying to cling to. Her feelings were harrowed, and she burst into tears, the first that she had been able to shed, for she seemed to have passed suddenly from a pleasant, safe and convenient abode into a prison.

The Grand Dukes made a very short stay. Towards morning the order to put on Russian dress was received, which meant that the Empress's end was approaching. However, the whole day passed in suspense; she had a long and agonised passing, without a moment's return of consciousness, but on the 6th, at eleven o'clock in the evening, the Grand Duchess Elizabeth and her sister-in-law, who was in her own apartments, were sent for. The Empress Catherine was no more. The Grand Duchesses passed through the crowd, hardly seeing what was round them, and the Grand Duke Alexander came to meet them, to tell them to kneel down when they kissed the hand of the new Emperor. They found him, with the Empress Marie, at the entrance to the bedroom. After having greeted him, they had to go through this bedroom, pass by the remains of

[1] In the last years of the reign of Catherine II, Paul had, at Gatchina, made up a little army, parodying that of Frederick the Great, with the same uniforms, the same regulations, and all the other features of Prussian corporalism.

the Empress without stopping, and enter the adjoining room, where they found the young Grand Duchesses in tears. Meanwhile the Empress Marie was superintending the dressing of the deceased Empress and the arrangement of the room with great activity and ability.

The defunct Empress was laid on a bed and dressed in *négligé*, after which the Imperial family assembled, to be present at the funeral service, which was recited in the room itself: then, after having kissed her hand, they repaired to the chapel, where the oath was taken to the Emperor in person. These mournful ceremonies were only over at two o'clock in the morning.

2

A change of sovereign rarely fails to bring about more or less disturbance in the lives of private individuals, but the accession of Paul I filled all hearts with fear. Possessed of every quality that goes to the making of a great ruler, and one of the most amiable men in his empire, he nevertheless succeeded in inspiring only fear and aversion. In his youth, travel, society pleasures, and the gratification of his thousand and one wishes, distracted his attention from the unpleasant nullity of his political position, but as he grew older he felt it keenly. He had a warm heart and an active mind, but his temper, naturally passionate, deteriorated as he grew older, until he ended by becoming suspicious, surly, and exacting in small things.

He isolated himself almost entirely, spending only the three winter months at his mother's Court, and the remainder of the time at Pavlovsk or Gatchina, his two country seats. From the navy, which was under his command, he had drawn two battalions of infantry that he modelled on the Prussian system. In the places under his authority he had introduced an exceedingly severe discipline, not only in the service, but also in his private Court. A minute's unpunctuality was often punished by arrest, and the more or less careful arrangement of a man's hair might mean

banishment from his presence, or his special favour. Men were obliged to adopt the costume of their grandparents to appear before him, and those who enjoyed the favour of the Grand Duchess were rarely liked by the Grand Duke, all of which caused people to avoid him as far as his rank rendered it possible. So far, however, there had only been insults and reprimands to fear, but, on his accession to the throne, all who had no special reasons to count on his good will were prepared for anything, since he often privately took such a dislike to an individual, who might not necessarily have offended him in any way, and showed it so plainly when opportunity arose, that that person's disgrace could be attributed to nothing but caprice.

In spite of the regrettable and often unjust feelings that he cherished towards his mother, he gave evidence of deep feeling when he saw her outstretched, lifeless, before him, but other impulses, unfortunately, very quickly gained the upper hand again. The most important practices of the Court were changed, and with the wave of a bâton he destroyed what had taken a glorious reign of thirty-four years to consolidate. The Court Marshal, Prince Bariatinski, was banished as one of those who had been concerned in the death of Peter III, and Count Alexis Orlov trembled in his shoes, but he was merely sent away after a time.

In the midst of the banishments, metamorphoses and promotions that took place about this time, a few amusing incidents occurred. M. Tourtchaninov had been the Empress Catherine's secretary, and entrusted by her with the control of her private houses. He was a little slip of a man, and so addicted to bowing and scraping that he only seemed half as high as he was. When the Empress Catherine was giving him orders as she walked about in the gardens of Tsarskoie Sielo his respect made him bend so very low that her Majesty, who was not tall, was obliged to stoop to speak to him. It was said that M. Tourtchaninov lined his pockets, but whether that was the case or not I do not know. However, the Emperor Paul, on his accession, manifested an antipathy for him that no one would have

suspected, considering how little he had come in contact with him. He sent word to him that he was to leave St. Petersburg and never show himself before him, and M. Tourtchaninov obeyed the order so literally that no one ever knew when or how he left the town. He was not seen to go out through any of the gates, and from that time forth was never heard of again in St. Petersburg.

The Emperor Paul, on his accession to the throne, gave on several occasions evidence of a desire to be just and merciful; he seemed to wish only for the happiness of his Empire, promised that the levying of recruits should be put off for several years, and endeavoured to suppress the abuses that had crept in during the later years of the Empress's reign. He evidently possessed great and lofty ideas, but he nullified the nobility of them and the interest felt in them, by his efforts to impugn the glorious memory of the Empress his mother. He ordered a memorial service to be held at the convent of Nevski, where his father was buried, and at this he was present himself, with the whole of his family and Court. The coffin was opened, but in it only the dust of the bones was found. This the Emperor commanded to be kissed, and he ordered a magnificent funeral with all religious and military ceremony, had the coffin conveyed to the castle, followed the procession on foot, and compelled Count Alexis Orlov to accompany him by making him responsible for a part of the ceremony. This took place three weeks after the death of the Empress.

A fortnight before this revolting action I was in attendance upon the body of her late Majesty. It was to be carried into the throne room, and I went into the attendants' room adjoining. It is impossible for me to put into words my conflicting feelings and the grief that overburdened my soul, and I looked round vainly in search of some face that might afford me solace. The Empress Marie was walking about giving orders and stage-managing the ceremony with an air of satisfaction that cut me to the heart, for there is a solemnity about death, an overwhelming reality, that ought to calm all worldly passions.

I passed into the throne room and sat down against the wall facing the side of the throne. About three yards off was a fireplace, against the mantel-piece of which one of Catherine II's private footmen was leaning. His despair and grief made my tears flow and I felt some relief.

On one side of the throne room is the Knights Guard room. The floor, the ceiling, and the walls of this room were hung with black, and the brilliant fire burning on the hearth was the only light in that chamber of mourning. The Knights Guardsmen, in their red capes and silver helmets, were standing about in groups, some leaning on their carbines, others lying on chairs, and a mournful silence reigned in the apartment, interrupted only by sobs or sighs. I stood for a time at the door, for the sight was in keeping with my own feelings. Sharp contrasts are an added suffering to grief, for either they irritate or they force it back on itself. Its bitterness is only softened when we find ourselves in surroundings in harmony with what we are ourselves experiencing. I went back to my chair, and a moment later the big doors opened, and the Court appeared clad in the deepest mourning, and crossed the room to fetch the body from the bedroom. I was roused from the depression in which the mournful sight had plunged me by hearing the funeral chant approaching. I saw the clergy appear, then the candle-bearers, the choristers, and the Imperial family, and lastly the corpse, which was carried on a magnificent bier covered with the Imperial mantle, the ends of which were borne by the persons holding the highest offices at Court. When I caught sight of my sovereign, I began to tremble all over and ceased to weep, while my sobs changed to little involuntary cries.

The Imperial family took their places in front of me, and, in spite of the solemnity of the occasion, M. Araktcheiev, a person of low condition promoted by the Emperor, and who had become the instrument of his rigorous severities, gave me a violent push and told me to be quiet. My grief was too real for any outside feelings to have power to affect me, and this really indecent interruption made no impression upon me. God in his mercy granted me a

moment's respite, however, for my eyes met those of the Grand Duchess Elizabeth, and I found in their expression some consolation for my soul. She came gently up to me and gently pressed my hand from behind.

When the ceremony was over, the whole Imperial family prostrated themselves in turn in front of the body and kissed the hand of her deceased Majesty. Then they withdrew, and a priest came and stood in front of the throne, to read the Bible, while six Knights Guardsmen took up their position round it. I went home, after being in attendance twenty-four hours, exhausted both in mind and body.

In a very few days the extent of the loss people had suffered began to make itself felt; the just liberty of the individual was fettered by a sort of terrorism, and the multiplicity of the rules of etiquette and the empty marks of respect to be observed no longer permitted one to breathe freely. Every time that we met the Emperor in the streets, which happened every day, not only were we compelled to stop, but to descend from our carriages, whatever the weather. In a word, everything, down to our hats, bore the hall-mark of restraint. Of the four regiments of Guards which from the time of their formation by Peter the Great had never had any colonel but the sovereign, two were given to the Grand Dukes Alexander and Constantine, who were made colonels by their father. The Horse-guards were given, in the same way, to the Grand Duke Nicholas, who was still a baby in arms. The Emperor reserved for himself only the Preobrajenski regiment, with the title of Chief. From that time onward the Grand Dukes were nothing better than corporals. The regiments were to be remodelled on the pattern of the Gatchina battalions, which were incorporated with them, and the task was no small one.

Young men of the highest families ordinarily began their military career in the Guards, because service in it was a sinecure, and they did little but wear the uniform, being promoted, by degrees, while amusing themselves at St. Petersburg. But now the service became an effective, and even very severe one, in which there was risk of banish-

ment or imprisonment, should one fail to carry the spontoon as it should be carried, to be well buttoned up, and to have the hair well curled. Imagine what it meant to recast every unit in a regiment in a fresh mould.

In addition to this arduous task, the Grand Duke Alexander performed the duties of Military Governor of St. Petersburg, so that, in the first confusion of reorganisation, since in the daytime he had often to give up so much time to mere display, he was scarcely able to snatch a few hours' rest during the night.

The Emperor sent orders to Marshal Souvorov to introduce the new uniform into the whole army. He obeyed, but under protest, sending him word that curls were not cannon, and queues not bayonets. And yet, amid this chaos of punctiliousness, pettinesses, and unreasonable demands, the Emperor had great and chivalrous ideas. There were in him two beings quite different. His mind was a labyrinth in which reason went astray. His natural disposition was noble and virtuous, and when it was in ascendency, his actions evoked respect and admiration. It is only justice to him to say that he was the only sovereign who sincerely wished to establish a legitimist succession, and believed that, without it, order could not be restored.

A week after my attendance on the body in the throne room, I was appointed to the same service in the large hall, where the balls had generally been held. There was a *castrum doloris* in the centre in the shape of a dome with a raised cupola, and in this the Empress lay in her coffin, with a gold crown on her head, and the Imperial mantle covering her to the chin. Six candles were placed round the coffin, and in front stood the priest reading the Gospel. Outside the columns, on the steps, the Knights Guardsmen stood, mournfully leaning on their carbines. The effect was fine, religious, and imposing, but the coffin containing the dust of Peter III, which was placed by the side of the bier, revolted one. This insult, that even death could not shield her from, this sacrilege of a son against his mother, added poignancy to my grief.

Fortunately for me, I was in attendance with Mme. de Tolstoy. Our hearts were in unison, and we drank the cup of bitterness together. Other ladies, who were in attendance with us, were relieved every two hours, but we asked to be allowed not to leave the body, a permission that was readily granted.

At eight or nine o'clock at night, the Imperial family arrived, walking very slowly, prostrated themselves before the body, and went away again, in the same order as they had entered, and in deep silence. An hour or two later came the waiting women of the dead Empress. They devoured her hand with kisses, and could hardly tear themselves away from it. Cries, sobs, and swoons interrupted again and again the solemn calm, for the Empress was adored by all who came near to her, and heartfelt prayers were raised to heaven for her. When day dawned, I was appalled, realising that the end of my attendance upon her was near.

The body of the Empress and the coffin of Peter III were carried to the fortress after the funeral service, and were laid in the vault of their predecessors.

When the funeral ceremonies were over, we received orders to appear at Court for our presentation, and we assembled in the black-hung Guardroom. The tremblers decided that it was necessary to kiss the Emperor's hand, prostrating themselves to the ground, an attitude which I thought ridiculous. When the Emperor and the Empress appeared, the bowings and scrapings succeeded each other with such rapidity that the Emperor had no time to object. I was indignant, and when my turn came, bowed as I was accustomed to do, and made as though to take the Emperor's hand to kiss, but he hastily drew it back, and in his haste and confusion, his kiss on my cheek made so much noise that he began to laugh. He pricked me very much with his beard, which had probably not been shaved that day, but I was too overcome with grief to feel the absurdity of the scene. The old ladies scolded me for not having followed their example and prostrated myself, but I told them that

no respect had ever been greater than mine for the Empress Catherine, and that, as I had not rolled on the ground before her, I could not and would not do so before her son. I do not know whether they recognised the justice of my reasoning, but the fact remains that prostrations were put an end to.

3

Very shortly after the Emperor Paul's accession, my husband asked his permission to travel, but his Majesty refused it, in the kindest manner, saying that he wished to keep about him men as honest as he. He appointed him Grand Master of the Grand Duke Alexander's Court and Count de Tolstoy became Marshal. I went to thank the Emperor on *Courtag*, which is what used to be called *appartement* in France, a sort of Public Court Day, at which both Court and Town were present. The reception was held in the Hall of St. George. When their Majesties arrived, all the persons who wished to thank them were assembled in one of the rooms through which they had to pass, and old Countess Matuchkine, Grand Mistress and Lady in Waiting, had to present the ladies and call out their names. Instead of giving my proper name, she called me Mme. Kozitski. I stopped and said :

'You are mistaken, Countess, I am the Countess Golovine.'

This explanation was given positively in the Emperor's hearing and made him smile. When we were at the reception, the Empress came up to me and said :

' Although they called out your name wrongly, Madame, I recognised you at once.'

' I shall always be happy,' I replied, ' when your Majesty is good enough to recognise me.'

She turned her back on me and walked away. Mme. de Gouriev, who was standing near, said to me :

'Heavens, my dear, how did you dare to give such a reply?'

'Because I am not so much afraid as you.'

At this same *Courtag*, I heard the Emperor make a very

strange reply. Princess Dolgorouki had begged for a pardon for her father, Prince Bariatinski, and his Majesty had refused it, but she had managed to gain the ear of Mlle. Nelidov, who promised her her assistance. I happened to be standing just behind the two, when the Princess was reiterating her prayers to Mlle. Nelidov to intercede for her with the Emperor. His Majesty came up to Mlle. de Nelidov, who spoke to him on behalf of Princess Dolgorouki, and said how she was suffering on account of her father's misfortunes. The Emperor replied : ' I, too, had a father, Madame ! '

I no longer saw anything of the Grand Duchess Elizabeth. My devoted affection for her was still the same, but the Grand Duke took advantage of his mother's dislike to me to deprive me of all means of seeing the Grand Duchess and associating with her.

But even had he wished things to be otherwise, it would have been a difficult matter to arrange for us to meet. On account of the multifarious occupations with which the Grand Duke was overwhelmed, all his arrangements and those of the Grand Duchess were altered and upset this first winter. There was no established order of things, and the day was spent in waiting and in suspense. Before daylight, the Grand Duke was in the Emperor's anteroom, and had often already spent an hour at the barracks of his regiment ; then parade and drill took up all the morning, and he dined alone with the Grand Duchess, occasionally with one or two guests. In the afternoon either there was further attendance necessary at the barracks, or there were offices to go to, or orders from the Emperor to execute. At seven o'clock he had to be in his Majesty's drawing-room and wait for him there, although sometimes he did not appear until supper time, which was at nine. After supper, the Grand Duke Alexander went to make his military report to the Emperor. In the meantime, the Grand Duchess attended at the retiring of the Empress, who kept her with her until the Grand Duke, as he came out of the Emperor's room, came to wish her goodnight and take the Grand Duchess

home. Worn out with the fatigues of the day, he was glad to be able to go to bed, and often the Grand Duchess was left sitting alone, to compare sadly the liberty, ease, and enjoyments of the past régime with the tension and constraint of the present one.

The Imperial circle consisted, in addition to the Imperial family, of the persons holding certain offices at Court and those who had been attached to the Emperor's person when he was only Grand Duke, such as M. Plechtcheiev, M. Kouchelev, and M. Donaourov. The Emperor had also brought from Moscow a M. Ismaïlov,[1] the only survivor of those who had been attached to Peter III, made him general aide-de-camp, and singled him out in many ways. The ladies of the Court were Mlle. de Protassov, who retained her position, Mlle. de Nelidov, and Mme. Benckendorf, who was recalled to St. Petersburg when the reconciliation between the Empress and Mlle. de Nelidov took place, and, in addition, the Grand Mistresses of the Grand Duchesses and the maids of honour in attendance. There were, further, two strangers who were admitted into the Emperor's private circle: Count Dietrichstein, sent by the Court of Vienna to congratulate his Majesty upon his accession, and M. Klingsporr, sent by the Court of Sweden on the same errand.[2]

[1] Peter Ivanovitch, 1724–1807, Captain of the Preobrajenski regiment, had sided in 1762 with Peter III against Catherine and been dismissed with the rank of colonel. Paul heaped him with attentions and honours, and when Ismaïlov reminded him of his age, which no longer permitted him to serve as a soldier, the Emperor replied: 'You served him who of all is dearest to me.' (*Archives Vorontsov*, XXIV, 253.)

[2] It was said that he was delegated to renew the marriage negotiations, but I have since learnt, on sure authority, that as soon as the King came of age (which happened a few days previously to the death of the Empress) he gave up all thoughts of the marriage, being convinced that the union could never be in conformity with what he owed to his country, on account of the difference of religion. But M. de Klingsporr, who was an astute diplomatist and a tool of the Duke of Sudermania, who was always endeavouring to injure his nephew, used to speak at St. Petersburg of the wish the Swedish Court had to see the negotiations renewed, until the Empress actually believed that the marriage would eventually take place. It will be seen how the Grand Duchess Elizabeth suffered from her disappointment, when the King of Sweden married her sister, the Princess Frederica. (Author's note.)

Supper was frequently interrupted by the announcement of a fire. The Emperor Paul, at the beginning of his reign, never failed to attend a fire anywhere in the town, at whatever hour of the day or night it might break out. His sons and all the officers followed him, and the ladies finished their supper alone, with the rest of the company.

The Emperor was extremely fond of display, and, as the deep mourning of the Court did not permit either balls or theatres, nor indeed any pleasures, with the exception of receptions, kissing of hands, card-playing, and suppers, the Court often went to the Community of Noble Ladies, which had grown a very interesting place, for reasons that I am about to explain. This establishment had been founded by the Empress Elizabeth, daughter of Peter I, and it is said that she had intended to end her days there. The Empress Catherine had turned it into an educational establishment for girls of the nobility, and during the first years of her reign, took great interest in it. The Emperor Paul, on his accession to the throne, gave the management of it to the Empress his wife.

Here it was that, in the early days of his reign, a very famous reconciliation took place. The Empress Marie, as Grand Duchess, had had a Mlle. de Nelidov in attendance upon her, as maid of honour. Mlle. de Nelidov is small and exceedingly plain; a swarthy complexion, tiny little eyes that one can hardly see, a mouth stretching from ear to ear, and a long waist, over legs as short as a dachshund's, do not make up a very attractive exterior. But she is very witty and clever, and in addition to her other gifts, is an excellent comedy actress. The Grand Duke Paul, who had for a long time made great fun of her, fell in love with her on seeing her play Zina, in 'La Folle par Amour.' That was when he was still fond of seeing people, and often had society plays acted at home.

But we must go farther back still to find the explanation of this intrigue. In the year 1783 or 1784 the Grand Duke Paul took a particular fancy to Prince Nicholas Galitzine, the chamberlain, a very shrewd man, and an intimate of Mlle.

de Nelidov, who persuaded the Grand Duke that it was time he threw off his wife's domination, adding that it pained him to see him governed by her and her friend, Mme. de Benckendorf.[1] He astutely exaggerated their little intrigues; the Grand Duke let himself be deceived, and Mlle. de Nelidov became the object of his preference. The feeling soon grew to a passion, which was a great trouble to the Grand Duchess Marie. She showed her jealousy most plainly, and stoutly resisted her husband in everything that concerned Mlle. de Nelidov, who was not as respectful to her as she might have been.

The Grand Duchess then made up her mind to complain to the Empress, who remonstrated with her son, but without effect, and finally threatened to send Mlle. de Nelidov away. Prince Galitzine took advantage of this threat to incense the Grand Duke still further against his mother, and he went off to his castle at Gatchina, where he eventually remained the whole winter, only coming into town for entertainments that he was absolutely obliged to attend. All that the Grand Duchess gained by her manœuvres was the removal of the persons who were most attached to her, for Mme. de Benckendorf and others were sent away, the Grand Duke rightly thinking that she was counselled by her friends and that, alone, she would be more amenable to his will. He was not mistaken, and the Grand Duchess, deprived of their moral support, submitted to the most disgraceful humiliations.

Some years later there was a temporary disagreement between the Grand Duke and Mlle. de Nelidov, caused by jealousy on the part of the latter, because the Grand Duke seemed to be attracted for the moment by another of his wife's maids of honour. Mlle. de Nelidov therefore left the Court and took up her abode at the Convent of the Community that I have just been alluding to, where she had been brought up. Matters were at this stage when the Emperor ascended the throne. At the first visit that

[1] Mme. de Benckendorf had come from Montbéliard with the Grand Duchess Marie, with whom she had been from her childhood.

he paid to the Community he made up his quarrel with Mlle. de Nelidov, and he succeeded in persuading the Empress to regard her and to treat her as her husband's best friend. From that time forth, the closest intimacy existed between the Empress and Mlle. de Nelidov, who was appointed maid in waiting, an office which up to that time had been held only by Mlle. de Protassov. The Empress, in concert with her new friend, exercised her influence to the full; they interfered in all matters of state, and promotions, and appointments, and, be it noted, mutually abetted each other.

The alliance would have been amazing had it not been quickly evident that it was to the interest of both parties. The Empress could hope for no influence over her husband without Mlle. de Nelidov, as results showed, but Mlle. de Nelidov, who had always had a regard for appearances, could likewise not hope to play the part that she did at Court without the Empress, whose countenance and good will served as a shield to her reputation.

The visits to the Convent became very frequent. The Empress delighted to entertain the Court in a place where she ruled, and Mlle. de Nelidov liked to show the public that the Emperor was attracted there by her, while the Emperor liked to go because it was a favourite resort of Mlle. de Nelidov. The three persons interested consequently enjoyed the evenings there exceedingly, and often spent the whole time talking together. But the rest of the Court, who always accompanied them, because the Emperor never went anywhere but in great state, and the Grand Dukes and Duchesses, found it insufferably dull. Sometimes the young pupils gave concerts, and at other times danced, but more often than not the supper was the only diversion, the rest of the time being spent in absolute idleness.

Some idea may be formed of what the Grand Duchess Elizabeth thus had to endure, and she was moreover exposed to treatment and to insults that, up to that time, she had never dreamt of. I will quote two instances. Knowing that one of the direst offences, in the Emperor's eyes, was to be late, one evening when they were going out to the

Community, the two Grand Duchesses, dressed ready to step into the carriage at once, were waiting in the apartments of the Grand Duchess Elizabeth, to be sent for. On receiving a message from the Emperor, they hastened to him, but when his Majesty appeared, he gave them a withering look, and pointing to them, said to the Empress :

'Those are manners which do not please me : they may be the usages of the past reign, but they are not mine. Take off your cloaks, ladies, and never dare to put them on again, except in the anteroom.'

This was said in the dry, insulting voice that was peculiar to the Emperor when he was in a bad temper.

The second instance occurred at Moscow, on the day of the Coronation. Everyone was in full Court dress, it being the first occasion on which Court dresses (which took the place of the Russian dress worn in the reign of Catherine II) made their appearance. The Grand Duchess Elizabeth, to complete her costume, had artistically intertwined some beautiful roses in a bouquet of diamonds, which she was wearing on one side. When she went in to the Empress before the ceremony, the latter looked her up and down, and, without uttering a word, tore the roses from her cluster, and flung them on the ground.

'That is not proper, with full dress,' she said. *That is not proper* was the expression always made use of when anything failed to please. The Grand Duchess was amazed, and more surprised at manners which, indeed, were hardly proper themselves, especially at that moment (when the Consecration and Communion were about to commence), than distressed at the loss of her bouquet.

The contrast between the always calm, dignified and grand manners of the past reign with the fuss, pettinesses and often the vulgarity that she then had before her eyes, shocked the Grand Duchess beyond expression. She was too noble-minded not to feel revolted, and her intellect was too well-balanced not to be dismayed. Her existence became a painful dream that she was afraid of waking up to find a reality. Her feelings were wounded or jarred upon

every moment of the day, and, as a result, her pride increased, and her natural dislike for an order of things displeasing to her was fostered. She performed all the duties of her exalted rank, but, as a compensation, created for herself an inner world in which imagination held sway rather than reason, and in it took refuge from the trials and vexations that she experienced in real life, with disastrous consequences to herself. But let us return to the preparations for the Coronation and some events immediately preceding it.

4

The Empress having, since her reconciliation with Mlle. de Nelidov, obtained once more a sort of ascendency over her husband, the two Princes Kourakine were installed, through her influence, the elder as Vice-Chancellor, the younger as Procurator-General,[1] Prince Bezborodko remaining Head of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Although the Emperor greatly disliked Count Panine,[2] he gave him, too, one of the highest posts in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, and M. de Nelediniski, cousin of Prince Kourakine, was also brought in through the special protection of the Empress, who in this way managed to surround the Emperor with her own faithful adherents. The only

[1] Alexander and Alexis Borissovitch. The former (1752–1818) was Minister for Foreign Affairs under Paul I (1800) and sent to Paris under Alexander I (1808–1812); the second (1759–1831) was for a time, under Alexander I (1807–1810), at the head of the Home Office and rendered himself celebrated chiefly by his Oriental manner of living on his beautiful estates in the Government of Orel. He married a Golovine. The two brothers belonged to the private circle of the Empress Marie Feodorovna.

[2] Nikita Petrovitch, son of one of Catherine's greatest generals, Peter Ivanovitch (1771–1837). Brought up with Paul, he embraced a diplomatic career, represented Russia at The Hague and at Berlin, and became, in 1799, Vice-Chancellor and Minister for Foreign Affairs. Removed from office by Rastoptchine, he took part in the plot which resulted in the assassination of Paul I, and became Vice-Chancellor again in 1801, but soon received his dismissal and was forbidden to reappear in the capital.

man he had about him selected by himself was Count Rastoptchine, whom he raised to the rank of Aide-de-Camp General, and whom he made Prime Minister.

The month of February 1797 was marked by the arrival of the King of Poland. One of the first acts of the Emperor Paul, on ascending the throne, had been to restore to liberty all the Poles in prison at St. Petersburg for having served in the cause of their country. The unfortunate Poniatowski, formerly King of Poland, and practically a prisoner at Grodno, was invited by the Emperor to St. Petersburg, and there received a very gracious welcome. He was induced to accompany the Court to Moscow for the Coronation.

The Court left on 1 March following, stayed for two days, on the way, at Pavlovsk, and from there the two Courts travelled separately, one a day in front of the other. After a five days' journey, the Courts arrived successively at the Castle of Petrovski, which is situated at the gates of Moscow. This castle was built by the Empress Catherine as a temporary abode, custom having ordained that the sovereign should make a state entry into Moscow[1] upon every visit to the town.

Petrovski had been built at the time when the Empress Catherine preferred Gothic architecture to all others, but the general appearance of the palace was that of a shapeless mass. It was gloomy and the situation was bad, for behind it was a wood intersected by bad roads, while in front it looked out over the high road, which traverses an arid plain. Although the town was only at a quarter of an hour's distance, it could not be seen. With the exception of the Emperor and Empress, everyone was very uncomfortably lodged and in a very bad temper. However, full state was kept up every day, and the Moscow public came out to Petrovski to pay court to the Emperor.

While staying at Petrovski the Empress received the

[1] It has been inhabited since by Buonaparte, and burnt by his satellites. That was the best thing that could happen to it, after it had been defiled by his presence. (Author's note.)

news of the death of Mme. de Benckendorf, her best friend; she mourned her for twenty-four hours, but appeared in public again next day. The Emperor often drove into Moscow on expeditions which were supposed to be incognito, but on which he was accompanied by the whole Court—the object of his visits being to inspect the hospitals and other establishments. One night when he was returning by a road that the thaw had rendered almost impassable, the carriage in which were the Emperor and Empress and the two Grand Dukes and the Grand Duchess Elizabeth seemed about to upset every moment. The Emperor enjoyed it, and asked the Grand Duke Alexander if *the Grand Duchess Elizabeth were afraid.* The Grand Duke, who thought he was praising his wife, replied: '*No, she was not a coward, and was afraid of nothing.*'

'*That is precisely what I object to,*' replied the Emperor.

The Grand Duke corrected himself, and added:

'She is only afraid of what she ought to be afraid of.'

But the mischief was done, the Emperor was put out of temper. In spite of all that was great in his disposition, there were such strange sides to his character that he was always ready to see an enemy in a person whom he was not sure of being able to frighten. Nor was it that at other times he was incapable of appreciating energy and lofty feeling, so that this pettiness must be attributed to the cautious and suspicious attitude that had been instilled into him.

It was at Petrovski that a marriage was arranged, which was celebrated at Court with some solemnity a few months later. Count Dietrichstein, envoy extraordinary from the Court of Vienna, being, as has been mentioned above, in great favour with the Emperor, had followed the Court to Moscow. As he did not sleep at Petrovski, he came out to dine with the Emperor every day, and as he had to remain to supper, spent the afternoons with Countess Chouvalov, whose younger daughter fell madly in love with him. Count Dietrichstein did not return her affection, but the Countess de Choiseul took the affair upon herself, and manœuvred

it so well that, six months later, the Count left Moscow with Countess Chouvalov, as her future son-in-law.[1]

The diplomatic position of Count v. Dietrichstein and the marked good will of the Emperor for him gave an éclat to this marriage which was naturally reflected also on Countess Chouvalov, not, for that matter, in great favour with the Emperor.

[1] The Countess, afterwards Princess de Dietrichstein, née Chouvalov, became a convert to Roman Catholicism.

CHAPTER VI

1797

1. Solemn entry into Moscow—*The little ways of the last reign*—The Bezborodko Palace—The Kremlin. 2. The Coronation—The Family Charter—The new order of succession—Honours and promotions—The rise of Koutaïssov—The kissing of hands—The Empress complains that her hand is not swelling—Pomps and absurdities. 3. Grand Balls—Rivals to Mlle. de Nelidov—A ball *by order of the police*—Exile of Marshal Souvorov—A pretended plot—Count Nikita Panine. 4. Return to St. Petersburg—New Imperial residences: Pavlovsk and Tsarskoie Sielo—Disquieting alarms—The feeling at Court and among the people—Sinister omens.

I

On the Saturday before Palm Sunday, 27 March, the state entry into Moscow took place. The procession was of great magnitude and troops were drawn up in line from Petrovski to the Bezborodko Palace, all the regiments of Guards having come from St. Petersburg, as is usual on such occasions. The Emperor and his sons were on horseback, and the Empress, the Grand Duchess Elizabeth, and one of the young Grand Duchesses drove in a large carriage specially constructed to accommodate all the Grand Duchesses and the Empress, but with the exception of those whom I have named, all of them were ill.[1]

[1] The Grand Duchess Anne had been ill when she left St. Petersburg, but, as illness was a great offence in the Emperor's eyes, she fought against her sufferings, until she nearly succumbed to inflammation of the lungs. She was taken from Petrovski to Moscow, where she had to be bled. The day after the entry into Moscow, the Emperor went to see her and said to her: 'I can see now that you really are seriously ill, and I am sorry to

The procession stopped at the Kremlin, where the Imperial family made a tour of the cathedrals and saluted the relics. After that, it proceeded and arrived at eight o'clock in the evening at the Bezborodko Palace, having left Petrovski at about twelve. This palace belonged to Prince Bezborodko, the Prime Minister, who had just had it done up for himself with extreme elegance and taste, but he offered it to the Emperor for the Coronation, because, with the exception of the Kremlin, there was no other in the city, and even the Empress Catherine had stayed in private houses the last few times she had been in Moscow, the Imperial palace having been burnt a long time previously. Soon after the Coronation the Emperor bought the palace from Bezborodko, but it was entirely destroyed at the time of the burning of Moscow. It was situated in one of the pleasantest quarters of the town, near the outskirts, and had a small garden, from which it was separated only by an ornamental lake in the Court Garden, a fine public promenade. It was not shut in by other buildings and there was rather a fine view from it, all of which made it as pleasant a residence as Petrovski was the reverse. The Grand Duke Alexander, his wife, and the young Grand Duchesses were quartered there, but the Grand Duke Constantine and his Court lived opposite, in what was known as the old Senate-House.

The Court only remained a few days at the Bezborodko Palace, and on the Wednesday in Holy Week moved in state to the Kremlin, to prepare for the Coronation.

One would need the historian's gift to tell succinctly all that renders the Kremlin venerable, and the pen of a poet to describe the impression produced by this beautiful and ancient pile, with its cathedrals, its palace—the Gothic style of which, with its terraces, ramparts and vaults, imparts to it an appearance of unreality, and which, from its elevated position, dominates the city of Moscow. The

see you suffering so; I admit that up to the present I thought it was one of the little ways you had got into in the past reign, and which I am determined to extirpate.' No one knows exactly what he meant by these *little ways of the past reign*, that he was constantly alluding to. (Author's note.)

palace properly so-called not being spacious enough to lodge the whole of the Imperial family, the Grand Duke Alexander and his wife took up their quarters in the Archbishop's palace, and the Grand Duke Constantine in the Arsenal. The Grand Duchess Elizabeth told me that she should never forget the impression that the sight of the Kremlin produced on her, the evening of her arrival.

When she came away from the Empress's apartments, she went to see the Grand Duchess Anne and did not leave her until dark. She was feeling sad, for the visit to Moscow had so far had no charms for her, only countless vexations. All that surrounded her, far from uplifting her imagination, only stifled her, and made her heart heavy. But, that evening, as she came out of her sister-in-law's rooms to her carriage, and glanced at the antique beauty of the Kremlin, thrown up in greater relief by a brilliant moonlight, which glittered with most striking effect on all the gilded domes, she felt a moment's involuntary enthusiasm, which was never afterwards effaced from her memory.

Two days later she witnessed a scene quite as beautiful and more august. The Emperor and all his Court heard the Good Friday vespers in a little chapel situated on one of the highest terraces of the Kremlin, and followed the procession of the Holy Shroud along a great part of the walls of the Kremlin. The evening was beautiful and calm and the sun near its setting. The eye roamed over the vast extent of the city, the church-bells of which mingled with the lugubrious chant of the procession. Everyone was struck with admiration. But such impressions are especially deep when they are in harmony with one's frame of mind.

2

The ceremony of the Coronation took place on Easter Day, 5 April, in the Cathedral of the Assumption. In the centre of the church and facing the altar a platform had been erected on which the Emperor's throne was placed, that

of the Empress being by the side of it, at a little distance away. On the right was a platform for the Imperial family and opposite to it a second. All round the building there was staging for the public.

The Emperor crowned himself, then he crowned the Empress, by taking the crown from his own head and touching his wife's with it, her small crown being placed on her head immediately after. After Mass, the Communion and the Consecration, and the *Te Deum*, the Emperor ordered to be read aloud from the platform on which his throne stood, the Family Charter, which he had had revised. In this charter, he regulated the order of succession, excluding women except in the default of males of the direct line. It likewise made provision for the event of a minority, determined the position of Dowager Empresses and Grand Duchesses, and the restrictions imposed on them. This document was laid on the Altar, in the sanctuary of the Cathedral in which it had been read.

Their Majesties dined on the throne in the Great Hall of the Palace. This apartment, situated on the ground floor, is a vaulted hall, the roof of which is supported on Gothic pillars. On the same side as the entrance, there is a platform from which the Imperial family watched the dinner. The three other sides have, at long distances apart, little windows framed in red cloth, with which the floor is also covered, and which gives a very curious appearance to the room, and made the balls which were afterwards held there anything but pleasant. There was a small room adjoining the platform, where dinner was served to the Imperial family and the King of Poland, who was present at all the ceremonies of the Coronation in royal robes. After dinner, the Grand Duchesses went to await the hour for vespers in the apartments of their young sisters-in-law, as they were the only members of the Imperial family who had rooms in the palace. But the accommodation provided for them was so insufficient that the Grand Duchess Elizabeth spent the afternoon in her own rooms, sitting on a box, although in full Court dress.

The honours and promotions announced at the Coronation

were numerous. The Emperor, on this occasion, expressed to the Grand Duke Alexander his approval of his intimacy with the princes Czartoryski, and asked him what he could do for them, that would be agreeable to them. The Grand Duke, knowing his father's predilection for all things military, thought he would be securing them from disgrace in the future and would make a good impression on the Emperor's mind on their behalf, by expressing in their name a wish to enter the army. The Emperor received the request very favourably, and appointed the two princes aides-de-camp, the elder to the Grand Duke Alexander, and the younger to the Grand Duke Constantine, at the same time very graciously granting them three months' leave of absence to go and visit their parents in Galicia. This holiday was a most extraordinary favour, especially at that time of year, since leave was usually only granted in the autumn.

This appointment, which attached Prince Adam Czartoryski, as a duty, to the person of the Grand Duke Alexander, and authorised his Imperial Highness's intimacy with him, displeased a great many people, and led to many subsequent regrettable incidents.

Prince Bezborodko was heaped with wealth. The Emperor had in his service, as personal attendant, a barber named Koutaïssov, a Turk by birth, who had been brought to Russia when a child, and who was the Emperor's godson. He now appointed him Master of the Robes, an office created specially for him. The rapid rise of Koutaïssov attracted considerable attention, especially when, at the end of the same year, he was decorated with the Order of St. Anne.

The Court heard Mass on Easter Monday and Easter Tuesday in the different Cathedrals of the Kremlin, and then, beginning on the Wednesday, for more than a fortnight, Their Majesties spent every morning, on the throne, in the Great Hall, to receive congratulations. The Emperor always thought there were too few people present, and the Empress repeated incessantly that she had heard the Empress Catherine declare that at her Coronation, such a crowd had thronged to kiss her hand that it had been badly swollen,

and she complained that her hand was not swelling at all. The Grand Master of the Ceremonies, M. de Valouiev, in order to satisfy their Majesties, made the same persons appear several times over, under different titles. For instance, there happened to be one person who filled a number of offices, and M. Valouiev, who would have liked to double their number, made him appear, on the same day, first as a senator, then as a deputy of the nobility, and as a member of such and such a tribunal.

The whole Imperial family and the Court were present as a background, at these Congratulation Ceremonies. The Emperor and the Empress were seated on their thrones, and the Imperial family stood on the right, surrounded with their different Courts, while the various corporations, and the ladies of Moscow, who were made to appear again on several occasions, gravely approached the throne, bowed, ascended the steps, kissed the hands of their Majesties, and withdrew to another side.

The upheaval, which had made a régime of terror succeed a reign of mildness, had brought about one unexpected result, which would be inexplicable, were it not that we know how extremes meet. When people were not trembling, they rushed into a mad, delirious gaiety. Never was there so much laughter, never was the ridiculous side of things so keenly felt and to such an extent made the most of, but also a sarcastic laugh was often seen to change into a grimace of terror.

It must be confessed that never was the sovereign authority so open to ridicule, and ridiculousness the keenness of the national wit will always pounce upon, wheresoever it may be found. The Emperor vented all the exasperation of his character [1] in his love of display; he seemed to be

[1] I cannot help here interpolating one remark, namely, that this exaggerated display on the part of the Emperor Paul had very regrettable results in his son's reign. The Emperor Alexander had been shocked, like everyone else, at his extravagances and lavish expenditure, and not one of the jests and complaints, so freely bandied about, failed to reach his ear. On his accession to the throne, he went to the opposite extreme and displeased the public, by abolishing, as far as was in his power, all display whatever. (Author's note.)

satisfying a long-pent-up passion, and frequently fell into pettiness. He seemed, sometimes, like a conceited private individual who had been allowed to play the part of an Emperor for a time, and was eager to enjoy a pleasure that would shortly be taken from him again. Neither the Empress's lack of natural dignity, nor the childish pleasure that her rôle caused her, and which she could not conceal, escaped the public, who made themselves amends for the constant state of apprehension in which they lived by indulging in jokes that were often exceedingly witty.

It was more especially during the Congratulations of which I have been speaking that these jokes were heard, and, to tell the truth, they were needed, to enliven the dullness and the fatigue of the ceremony. The Gentlemen of the Court, who stood round the Grand Duchesses—especially my husband and Prince Galitzine [1]—strung off their mischievous and jesting remarks on persons and events, and thanks to the distance at which they were from their Majesties, it was thus possible to relieve a little the insipidity of the long mornings.

3

There were several Grand Balls, which grew to be a source of great uneasiness to the Empress and Mlle. de Nelidov. Among the many ladies who came to Court there were several very pretty women, amongst others, the Chtcherbatov princesses,[2] and the ladies Lapoukhine,[3]

[1] Alexander, son of Prince Nicholas Mikaïlovitch, the victor of Pongatchov. Born in 1788, died in 1844, he was amongst Alexander's most intimate friends. A very cultured, but dreamy man, he rather encouraged the sovereign's mystical inclinations and his intimacy with Jung Stilling and Mme. de Krudener; he presided in 1812 over the formation of the Russian Bible Society, and later, wielded great influence as Minister of Public Instruction and Worship.

[2] Anne and Marie, daughters of Prince Andrew Nikolaïevitch. Anne afterwards married Count D. N. Bloudov, who became Home Secretary and President of the Academy of Science. It was said by contemporaries that she much resembled the Empress Elizabeth, wife of Alexander I.

[3] Catherine and Anne, daughters of Peter Vassilievitch and of his first wife, Anne Ivanovna Levchine. Rendered illustrious by the marriage

and these latter, in particular, attracted the Emperor's attention. He referred to them on several occasions, and it is even asserted that the uneasiness that the Empress and Mlle. de Nelidov felt concerning them made them hasten their departure from Moscow.

The Emperor resided alternately in the Kremlin and at the Bezborodko Palace. As each transfer was made the occasion for a solemn entry, the Emperor repeated them as often as possible. The Court likewise paid several visits to places in the environs of Moscow, to the Convents of the Trinity and the Resurrection, which latter is also sometimes called *the New Jerusalem*,[1] to Kolomenskoie, the birth-place of Peter the Great, to Tsaritsine, an Imperial castle in a delightful situation, and to Arkhangelskoie, a country-seat which at that time belonged to Prince Galitzine.

The Emperor drove to all these places in huge carriages with seats for six and sometimes eight persons, and, on the way, his secretaries relieved each other in reading to him on current affairs, military reports, and the petitions of various kinds that were addressed to him. The Grand Duchess Elizabeth, who was always in the Emperor's carriage, has told me that she was often struck, whilst this reading was going on, with the irascibility of the Emperor's temper when anything happened to displease him, and the callousness with which he made jest of people who appealed to him for help. It is possible that the youth and inexperience of

of Peter the Great with the daughter of an obscure nobleman of the same name, the family owed their princely title only to the favour of which Anne Petrovna now became the object, thanks to the intrigues of her step-mother, Catherine Nicolaievna Chetniev, mistress of one of Paul's favourite aides-de-camp, Theodore Petrovitch Ouvarov. Mme. Lapoukhine, her lover, and Koutaïssov, conspired to throw the girl into the Emperor's arms. Born in 1777, died in 1805, the latter soon afterwards married Prince Paul Gavrilovitch Gagarine. Her sister, Catherine, was married to Gregory Alexandrovitch Demidov.

[1] The convent, which is delightfully situated, is the more interesting because its church is built after the model of the one at Jerusalem, and that all the spots sacred to our Lord's Passion are there represented. (Author's note.) It was built, toward the middle of the seventeenth century, by the celebrated patriarch Nikone, author of the ecclesiastical reform which resulted in the *Raskol*.

the Grand Duchess Elizabeth deceived her as to the Emperor's real feelings, but jokes of that description were very repellent to her.

A Grand Italian opera and an Assembly of the Nobility, which their Majesties honoured by their presence, a dinner given by the King of Poland, a state walk in the Court Garden and another on 1 May along the public promenade, were the winding-up festivals of the Coronation.

I was present at none of those given during this time at St. Petersburg. I remained with Mme. de Tolstoy, my heart weighed down with lasting sorrow, and I excused myself from the public rejoicings. However, I was compelled to attend a masked ball, to which people were not invited, but summoned to attend by order of the police. Those who refused to submit to the order were to have their names written down on a certain list, and would thus be made known to the Emperor. So I went to this wretched entertainment, as did Mme. de Tolstoy. The ball opened with a Polonaise that my ear recognised as one I used to hear in happier times, and the music upset me terribly, my sobs almost stifling me.

During the Coronation Festivities, Prince Repnine received a letter from Count Michael Roumiantsov, who was then Lieutenant-General under Marshal Souvorov. Count Michael was an excessively narrow-minded and haughty man, and as great a gossip as an old woman. The Marshal treated him as he deserved, which took him aback, and he resolved to revenge himself. He wrote to Prince Repnine that the Marshal was winning people over to himself, and that a revolt was in preparation. Prince Repnine knew well enough that the tale was false, but could not resist the temptation of doing an injury to the Marshal, whose merits he envied. So he took Count Roumiantsov's letter to Count Rastoptchine, who pointed out to him the danger of rousing the Emperor's ire, but his arguments made no impression on Prince Repnine, who himself took the letter to the Emperor, with the result that Marshal Souvorov was banished.

The Emperor Paul's unfortunate temper caused him to commit so many acts of injustice that it is difficult to reconcile them with one's conception of a noble character.

I will venture here to interrupt my story for a moment to quote an anecdote, very little known, but quite authentic, which will prove what greatness and natural goodness there were in this prince.

Count Panine, the son of Count Peter Panine, whom I have previously mentioned, in no wise resembled his father. His conduct was by no means exemplary, and he had no strength of character, while his intelligence was only equal to intrigues and the creating of disturbances. The Emperor Paul, who at that time was still only Grand Duke, took an interest in him because he was the nephew of Count Nikita Panine, his tutor, and Count Panine took advantage of the Grand Duke's inclination for him, to redouble his zealous attentions, succeeding eventually in winning his confidence. Perceiving that the Empress and her son were at variance, he tried to estrange them altogether, that he might be able, later, to carry out his own ambitious and even criminal intentions, and on his return to Gatchina after a short stay in the Capital, he asked the Grand Duke for a private interview, as he had a very important matter to communicate to him; whereupon the Grand Duke appointed a time for him to come to his study. The Count entered humbly, and cleverly masking his own perfidy, finally told the Grand Duke, after much feigned hesitation, that he had come to tell him of a matter that would be a great blow to his affections, for the Empress had conceived a plot against him and intended to have him put to death.

The Grand Duke asked him whether he knew who the conspirators were, and, on his replying in the affirmative, ordered him to write down their names, whereupon Count Panine drew up a long list, drawn entirely from his imagination. 'Sign,' added the Grand Duke. He did so. Then the Grand Duke, seizing the paper, said:

'Go, traitor, and never dare to show yourself before me again.'

He informed his mother of this atrocious calumny, and the Empress was as indignant as himself. The paper remained in the Grand Duke's possession, in a special casket, which he always kept in his bedroom.

4

But to return to the happenings at Court after the Coronation. On 3 May, the Emperor left Moscow with his sons, to make a tour of the governments newly acquired through the partition of Poland and to return direct from thence to St. Petersburg. The Empress left Moscow at the same time as the Emperor, with the Grand Duchesses, her daughters-in-law, and the Grand Duchess Alexandrine, her daughter. She had told them all three that they should not leave her, either by day or night. And, indeed, both on the way, and after they arrived at Pavlovsk, she made them even sleep in her room, the Grand Duchesses Elizabeth and Anne having no other apartment.

The Grand Duchess Elizabeth's health, which had withstood the many trials of the preceding winter, and all the fatigues of the Coronation, gave way at last, and she sank into a languid, suffering state that made her long impatiently for the Emperor's return, that she might at any rate be relieved from the subjection in which she found herself. At the end of May, he came back, and the Empress went with the Court to meet him at Gatchina, where they remained only a few days, after which the Court returned to Pavlovsk.

The Emperor did his utmost to blot out the memory of the preceding reign, and one of the means that he adopted was to change as far as possible the residences of the Court. The Empress Marie had an aversion to Tsarskoie Sielo, which nothing but her jealousy for Pavlovsk, which she created, can account for, and consequently the Imperial castle of Tsarskoie Sielo, a residence worthy of a sovereign and in which the entire Court could have been properly accommodated,

was abandoned and despoiled of its most beautiful effects, which were taken to Pavlovsk, a pretty place, but in no wise proportioned to the suite which it must of necessity contain, on becoming the residence of a sovereign with a passion for ostentation and display. Building was commenced in haste, but these buildings, like all the rest, were in the most striking contrast to those of the preceding reign. Catherine II had had a magnificent palace erected at Tsarskoie Sielo for her grandson, but the Empress Marie, while building a wooden house for the heir to the throne, gave him temporary accommodation in a cottage, for in point of size the Grand Duke Alexander's habitation was little more: still, the Grand Duchess Elizabeth was glad enough to be there, after the three weeks that she had spent at the castle.

One evening, shortly after the Emperor's return, when he was walking in the garden at Pavlovsk with his suite and his usual company, everyone's attention was attracted by the sound of a drum. It was too soon for it to be the tattoo, and the Emperor stopped to listen rather uneasily, and heard the drum beating to arms. 'It is a fire!' he exclaimed, and hastened back to the castle, followed by the Grand Dukes and the officers. The Empress and the rest of the company followed slowly. As they approached the castle, they found one of the paths leading to it blocked by part of the Guards regiments, while the rest, both cavalry and infantry, were hurrying up at full speed from every direction. Everybody asked where they were to go, people knocked up against each other, and in the narrow path, blocked by troops, the horsemen, fire engines, and the military carriages could only force a passage by shrieking and shouting in the most appalling manner.

The Empress, leaning on the arm of a cavalryman of her suite, made her way through the crowd, asking for the Emperor, whom she had lost sight of, and the confusion became so great at last, that several ladies, and notably the Grand Duchesses, had to climb the hurdles to escape the risk of being crushed to death.

Soon after, orders were given to the troops to disperse, and everyone returned to the castle, the Emperor excited and much put out, but there was a great deal of coming and going which lasted far on into the night. Such an assemblage of a troop reputed to be restless, such as the Guards were, and without any pretext being adduced, was enough to alarm a man of so suspicious and distrustful a temper as the Emperor. After many inquiries, it was ascertained that all the commotion had been caused by a trumpeter practising in the barracks of the Horse-guards. The troops in the adjoining barracks thought it was a signal, and repeated it, and thus the alarm was passed on from one regiment to the next. The troops thought it was fire, or else a test of their quickness in assembling, but the general sentiment prevailing both at Court and amongst the public, which from the beginning of this reign had been of such a nature as might have given warning of its end, led people to interpret quite differently the incident that had occurred and, more particularly, what happened two days later.

Nothing is so likely to provoke treason as apprehension lest it should occur. Paul I was unable to conceal to what an extent fear of treachery poisoned his existence, and this fear could be traced in his every action, till the many cruelties he allowed to be perpetrated, which emanated from this ever-present dread, ended by exasperating the temper of the nation, and justifying his alarms.

Two days after the evening I have just been speaking of, and at about the same time, when the Court were walking in another part of the garden, only separated from the road by a light fence, a trumpet sounded and a few horsemen galloped up a little path that led from the road. The Emperor rushed furiously towards them, with his stick raised, and forced them to turn back, and the Grand Dukes and the aides-de-camp all hastened to follow his example. Everyone was rather surprised at this second scene, and the Empress quite lost her head. She cried out to the Chancellors:

'Run, gentlemen, save your Emperor.'

Happening to encounter Count Felix Potoçki, a good-natured but rather clumsy lout, who was ridiculously afraid of the Emperor, she seized him by the arm and pushed him forward. Never did anyone present a more ridiculous appearance than this poor Count Felix, who did not in the least understand what he was wanted to do, and who was much more alarmed at the Empress's cries, than at the danger in which the Emperor might be.

This time, it was possible to prevent the troops assembling, but no one ever could, or would, tell in what the commotion had originated. Some said that, convinced the disturbance of two evenings before had been an alarm ordered by the Emperor, the Guards had been holding themselves in readiness for a signal, and had mistaken an accidental noise for a call. Others said that a practical joker sounded the alarm, to cause another uproar like that of two evenings before. In the end a few people were punished, and there was no repetition of anything of the kind.

The Grand Duchess Elizabeth's languor, instead of improving, grew worse, and she obtained permission not to appear in public for a few weeks and to retire into complete seclusion. The doctors ordered her to spend the time in a cure. While she was at home, the Grand Duke Alexander narrowly escaped being killed, and was only saved by a miracle. He was present one morning with the Emperor at an inspection of troops, and his horse was standing behind his Majesty on the brow of a hill. A movement of the troops, which made their muskets flash in the sunlight, frightened the Grand Duke's horse, and it reared, lost its hind footing, and rolled down the hill with its rider. No one dared to approach the Grand Duke, who they thought had been killed. However, the sum of the damage he had sustained was that he was very badly bruised and had bent his collar-bone. If he had been a few years older, it would have been broken.

CHAPTER VII

1797–1799

1. Far from the Court—Family joys—Memories and sorrows—The Emigration—The Princess of Taranto—A four days' favour. 2. The Emperor's cruise—Gallantry the order of the day—Mother and daughter-in-law—The author's friendship with the Princess of Taranto. 3. New aspect of the Court—Death of the King of Poland—The mysticism of Paul I—The Mikaïlovski Palace—The army of the Princes in Russia—The *Hôtel de Condé* at St. Petersburg—A new favourite: Mlle. de Lapoukhine. 4. A romantic intrigue: Lord Whitworth and Mme. de Tolstoy—The Comédie Française: Pavlovsk: Mme. Chevalier—The Emperor in love—The Empress interferes in politics—The Order of Malta—Paul I Grand Master—Disgraces and exiles—The retirement of Mlle. de Nelidov. 5. The triumphs of the Lapoukhines—Paul's depravity—The rehabilitation of the valse—War against revolutionary France—Souvorov—Misconduct of the Grand Duke Constantine—Death of Prince Bezborodko—Count Rastoptchine succeeds him at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs—Favours and severities—A disputed decoration—Count Golovine leaves the Court of the Grand Duke Alexander.

I

I SPENT the summer of 1797 with Mme. de Tolstoy at the country-seat of Princess Bariatinski, her mother, five versts from the Imperial castle of Peterhof,[1] to which the Court removed to celebrate the Empress's birthday, in July. Count Tolstoy and my husband divided their time between the Court and us. The house was most pleasantly situated, on a slight elevation, and had a delightful view over the Gulf, to which a very pretty avenue led down from

[1] About 3½ miles. A verst is 3,500 feet.

the grounds ; there were charming walks in every direction, woods, gardens, and a quantity of flowers and fruit. From the window of my sitting-room I looked out over the town on my right and the sea on my left. We were very happy, our friendship and the care of our children absorbing our time in as interesting and satisfactory a manner as possible.

Our two elder girls, who were the same age, were always together, and we were very pleased to observe the growing intimacy between them. Mme. de Tolstoy's second daughter was a very quick, intelligent child, then four years old—three years younger than her sister. My younger daughter and the Countess's son were nearly two, and nothing could be more winning than the sight of these two cherubic babies, picking flowers and running up to us, holding out their little garments full of the harvest they had just gathered.

I loved to linger in an evening on the steps and admire the sunset, and then I would be assailed by recollections of the past, the tenderest of which were associated with the Grand Duchess Elizabeth, who was, and always will be to me, a sacred memory. The calm of a beautiful evening is like the repose of the soul, which enables our faculties to perceive what the hurry and bustle of daily life allow to escape us. I passed in review, in my own mind, the greatness that was no more, with the circumstances of my intimacy with the Grand Duchess, and I shed tears to the memory of her who had heaped me with benefits, for it was to her that I owed my acquaintance and my love for the one whom I shall always most tenderly cherish.

The attachment that one feels for a beloved sovereign cannot be compared with any other, and must be experienced to be understood. The feeling is infinitely removed from pride, and is one of pure devotion. But people never will believe in nor understand it, and always suppose it to be based more or less on personal vanity or the hope of preferment.

It will be appropriate to speak here of the arrival, while the Court was at Peterhof, of the Princess of Taranto, Duchess de La Tremoïlle, the daughter of the Duke de

Chastillon, a peer of France and the last of his name. She was one of the ladies of the unfortunate Queen of France, and was in danger of being sacrificed for her fidelity and attachment to her master and mistress. The Emperor Paul and his wife had known her when they were in Paris in 1781, having often met her at the house of her grandmother, the Duchess of La Vallière, and the courage and noblemindedness she exhibited under her misfortunes added even more to the esteem and interest their Imperial Highnesses felt for her. After she came out of prison, her brother-in-law compelled her to escape to London to save her life. The King and Queen were already in the Temple, and Mme. de Tarente, not being able to share their lot, consented to leave her country for a time, but, when she wished to go back, a decree had been passed forbidding all émigrés to return to France. She endured poverty and misfortune, and the death of her King and Queen was her crowning grief. She had been in London five years when the Emperor Paul and the Empress Marie, on their accession to the throne, invited her, in the kindest and most considerate terms possible, to come to them, offering, and promising her in writing, an estate in Russia, on which she would be able to live quietly with her family.

The Princess of Taranto was inclined to refuse the offer, generous though it seemed, for she did not wish to leave off the mourning garb so much in keeping with her own lasting sorrow, and she was amply satisfied with a pension of 2000 roubles which the Queen of Naples had granted her three years before. But the advantage that her sister and her family might derive from the Emperor's offer, which included them all, induced her to travel to Russia, with no further guarantee than a note from the Empress, and without making any further demands or conditions.

The members of her family were known to their Majesties, who had secretly assisted them when they were still only Grand Duke and Grand Duchess, and the Princess of Taranto, who was living very quietly in London, quite out of the world, decided on this further sacrifice and arrived at

Cronstadt, after a sea-voyage of seventeen days, shortly before the birthday festivities at Peterhof.

Her arrival interested me, for my uncle had known her grandmother well, and had often spoken to me of her. I felt really wishful to see her, not merely with the curiosity that a fresh object of interest excites.

Some of the Court came to tell us the details of her reception, which caused a great deal of comment. She arrived on Sunday, 19 July 1797, at one o'clock P.M. and was conducted after dinner into the private room of their Majesties, who received her with quite marked kindness. The Empress fastened on her dress the little badge of the Order of St. Catherine, recently founded, and of which she was the Head, and on the Monday and Tuesday courtesies and attentions, and useful presents, most delicately offered, were showered upon her. The Princess of Taranto became the cynosure of all eyes. On the Wednesday we went to the Empress's birthday entertainment, and all the ladies assembled before Mass in a room adjoining the gallery leading to the Chapel. Everyone was doubly impatient for the Court to arrive, that they might see the Princess of Taranto, who was to accompany them. The noble melancholy of her appearance struck everyone, and touched me deeply. After Mass, she was appointed lady-in-waiting and received the portrait.

The next day, the Court returned to town, to the Taurida Palace. The Emperor made her sit next to him at supper, paid her great attention, and talked to her about France with evident interest. These attentions and the pleasure that he seemed to find in her conversation roused anxiety and suspicion in the narrow and intriguing mind of Prince Alexander Kourakine, who fancied that the Emperor might take a serious fancy to the Princess of Taranto and send Mlle. de Nelidov away, and having nothing better to do, he communicated his officious and vile suspicions to Mlle. de Nelidov. She fired up at once at the suggestion of a fresh intrigue and hastened to consult the Empress, whose jealousy was easily aroused, and between them they

succeeded in prejudicing the Emperor's mind against the Princess of Taranto. She, suspecting nothing, appeared the following day at the Taurida Palace, to accompany the Court to the Community. When their Majesties appeared, the Empress went up and spoke a few words to Countess Chouvalov, who was standing by Mme. de Tarente, stared at the latter from head to foot, and, when she heard her attempt to address a few words to her, turned her back on her. The Emperor never looked at her.

This sudden change of front amazed and troubled Mme. de Tarente,[1] and M. de Plechtcheiev, whose kind heart felt for her in her difficult position, went up to her soon after she arrived at the Community, and told her that she was in the direst disgrace, that she would not be invited to Pavlovsk, where the Court were returning the same day, and that it would be wiser for her not to happen to be in the Emperor's way, when he withdrew.

Thus ended a period of favour that had lasted four days. The result of the promises was a pension of 3000 roubles from the Emperor and 1200 roubles from the Empress,[2] for as long as the Princess should remain in Russia.

2

A few days after the entertainment at Peterhof, the Emperor embarked for Revel. The Empress, although she was in the third month of her pregnancy, wished to go with

[1] She alludes to it in her *Recollections*, but without suggesting any plausible reason for the disgrace.

[2] An allowance of 4500 roubles altogether, according to the Princess, who writes that the two pensions altogether amounted to 450 louis, calculating at 250 louis the pay of 2500 roubles that her brother-in-law, the Duke de la Tremoïlle, would receive by taking service in the Russian army as major-general. After this time, the rouble, which had been equal to 5 francs at the beginning of the reign of Catherine II, seems to have been brought down in value to 2 francs by the abuse of paper currency. These details concerning the favour shown to the Princess of Taranto and her sudden disgrace are confirmed by a letter from the Court Doctor, Rogerson, to Count R. S. Vorontsov, dated August 1797 (*Archives Vorontsov*; xxx. 106).

him, and Mlles. de Nelidov and Protassov accompanied her, the Grand Dukes and a fairly numerous suite being also with their Majesties. The Emperor and his immediate circle sailed in the frigate *Emmanuel*, which was arranged to carry a large number of persons, and fitted up in a manner that could not be expected in a man-of-war. This frigate formed part of a squadron, the other vessels of which carried the remainder of the suite.

The Emperor was becalmed for four or five days in the roadstead opposite to Oranienbaum,[1] where the Grand Duchesses Elizabeth and Anne were to spend the time of their Majesties' absence. During these few days, the Grand Duchesses were rowed out to the frigate to dine and only returned in the evening. They came from Oranienbaum, but as the rest of the company had received orders to await the Emperor's return at Peterhof, he admitted certain of them to his table, as long as he was in the roadstead.

M. de . . . . ., the envoy of Wurtemburg, was of this number, and he greatly enlivened the tedium on board ship by the unexpected things he used to say in French. One afternoon, Mlle. de Renne, maid of honour to the Grand Duchess Anne, was lying on a little couch in the saloon between decks, waiting until the Grand Duchesses should be ready to leave, and M. de . . . . came in, and on Mlle. de Renne's changing her position for one of less unrestraint he exclaimed :

' Oh, it is much pity, for the attitude excellent was ! '

At last they set sail, but the next day, before they were out of the Gulf, there came on such a fearful storm that they were obliged to cast anchor, and some of the vessels of the squadron were practically wrecked. After their Majesties had been tossed about for four and twenty hours, they had had enough seafaring, and returned as quickly as possible to Peterhof, where all the Court met and spent another week or thereabouts.

[1] The Emperor had just given this Imperial country-seat to the Grand Duke Alexander and the one at Strelna to the Grand Duke Constantine, (Author's note.)

As an instance of the Emperor's peculiarities, I will here narrate an anecdote of this period. Princess Chakhovskoï, afterwards Princess Galitzine,[1] maid of honour to the Grand Duchess Elizabeth, happened to be in attendance during the whole of the season and accompanied the Court on all these travels. She was very pretty, and the Emperor had noticed her. One day, at Peterhof, during the parade, he ordered to be inserted in the order of the day '*thanks*' *to the Grand Duke Alexander for having such a pretty maid of honour at Court.* It is said that this jest gave great offence to Mlle. de Nelidov, and that she took a great dislike to Princess Chakhovskoï from that time forth.

After spending two days at the Taurida Palace, the Court returned to Pavlovski, leaving for Gatchina in the middle of August.

During the latter part of the stay at Pavlovski, the Grand Duchess Elizabeth received a letter from the Princess, her mother, in which she wrote that she was going to Saxony, to see her sister, the Duchess of Weimar; but, in invisible ink, she had added on a blank page these few words:

'*Judge of my surprise: M. de Taube, who is here, has just asked, on behalf of the King of Sweden, for the hand of one of your younger sisters in marriage. I am so astounded that I do not know what to reply.*'

The Court had no sooner arrived at Gatchina, and the Grand Duchesses withdrawn to their apartments, than the Empress sent for the Grand Duchess Elizabeth. As soon as she appeared, the Empress, who was sitting at her table with some newspapers in her hand, and who had Mlle. de Nelidov behind her, addressed the Grand Duchess with some asperity:[2]

[1] Nathalie Fiodorovna, wife of Prince Alexander Mikhaïlovitch.

[2] The relations between the mother-in-law and daughter-in-law were not in a general way quite as harmonious as they might have been, as appears from the letters of the Grand Duchess Elizabeth to her mother, published by the Grand Duke Nicholas Mikhaïlovitch (*L'Impératrice Elisabeth I*, 293 and after), but the King of Sweden's decision ought not to have come as a surprise to Marie Feodorovna. The Grand Duchess Elizabeth wrote on July 1, 1797: 'No one but the Empress could continue to believe in the King's love, after all his refusals of our offers of poor Alexandrine.' (Ibid. i. 299.)

'What is this? The King of Sweden is marrying your sister?'

'This is the first time I have heard it mentioned,' replied the Grand Duchess.

'But it is in the *Gazettes!*'

'I have not been reading them.'

'That is impossible, you knew about it; your mother is meeting the King in Saxony and taking your sisters with her.'

'I knew that my mother was intending to go to Saxony, to see my aunt, but I did not know that she had any other object in going.'

'That is not true; it is not possible; you are treating me infamously; you are not open with me, and you expose me to the humiliation of learning from the papers the insult that has been offered to my poor Alexandrine! And that at a moment when we had every reason to believe that her marriage would be arranged, when we were being lured on by false hopes! It is abominable! It is infamous!'

'But it is not my fault!'

'You knew about it, and you did not tell me. You have been lacking in respect to me and in confidence towards me.'

'I did not know. For that matter, my letters are read in the post; perhaps you will ascertain what my mother writes to me.'

This was the last word that the Grand Duchess Elizabeth spoke, for she was much upset and even irritated at the scene which had just taken place. After listening to another torrent of words, all equally abusive, she withdrew. From that time forth the Empress would not speak to her, and was not only sulky and ill-tempered with her, but she flung witticisms at her that were meant to be cutting, but were only poor.

One evening when the Grand Duchesses joined their Majesties in the garden for a walk, the Grand Duchess Elizabeth approached the Empress to kiss her hand. The Empress held her hand out affectedly, and the Grand Duchess kissed it with a very good grace. The Empress, instead of kissing her back, said, very bitterly:

'You are proud: you will not kiss my hand, because your sister is a Queen.'

The Grand Duchess merely shrugged her shoulders, and looked at her pityingly, which stung the Empress to such an extent that she made the same remarks to the Grand Duchess Anne. The Emperor did not follow his wife's ridiculous example, and in no way altered his treatment of the Grand Duchess Elizabeth. He said jestingly to her one day:

'Your sister is following in my daughter's tracks.'

'I am sorry for it,' replied the Grand Duchess Elizabeth.

'But after all, what does it matter to us? We will find a husband for Alexandrine,' his Majesty remarked.

Though the Princess of Taranto's disgrace did not surprise me, I was very much grieved at it, but was unable to show her what I felt, since she had drifted into a circle that was not mine, namely, that of Princess Alexis Kourakine, and of Princess Dolgorouki, where all did their utmost, without her being aware of it, to prevent her coming to my house. When I came back to town she paid a visit to my mother and also to me, which visit I returned without undue haste, and a few days later my uncle entertained her to supper, when I acted as hostess. We were very much on our guard with each other, for she had been told that I was a pedantic, pretentious, and affected woman.

The Princess has since told me that she had dreaded me, and imagined I was a very learned woman. These little tricks that were resorted to, to prevent people knowing me, were not unknown to me, and I said to Mme. de Tolstoy:

'In a short time, the Princess of Taranto will be at my house every day, for my heart tells me so, and it has rarely deceived me.'

After she had paid me one or two visits, I invited her to dinner, but the evening before, my younger daughter and Mme. de Tolstoy's little girl were taken ill with small-pox, and I wrote to the Princess to tell her how sorry I was that I could not receive her. My daughter had the fever more severely, but Mme. de Tolstoy's little girl, although she was not so ill, died in convulsions. Her mother was in a piteous

state, and I took her into my house, and nursed her myself for a month. Count de Tolstoy came with her, and, for a fortnight, shared my husband's room.

The six weeks having elapsed, the Princess of Taranto wrote and asked to see me, to which I gladly agreed. When she came in, I was sitting with Mme. de Tolstoy, the suffering written on whose face struck the Princess, who involuntarily took a step backward. I went forward to meet her and made her sit down between the Countess and me, but the Princess had not had the courage to turn her head towards her, still less to speak to her, before Mme. de Tolstoy had a frightful attack of nerves. The Princess then picked her up in her arms, and carried her into my sitting-room, where she attended to her with the utmost solicitude. I had no strength to do anything, for Mme. de Tolstoy's condition made me feel quite helpless. When she was feeling better, the Princess came up to me and said :

'You are unhappy and uneasy ; let me come again to-morrow.'

And, indeed, she came again every day. Our friendship sprang up, without difficulty, of itself : she was mourning a beloved sovereign, and I, better than anyone else, was in a position to enter into her feelings.

3

The Court returned to Gatchina and remained there till the beginning of November, and after their arrival, manœuvres were carried out by the Guards regiments that always accompanied the Emperor. These manœuvres were repeated every autumn at the same time, except in 1799, which was the year of the Campaign in Italy. As the season advanced, the evenings were spent at the theatre, most frequently at the Italian opera, not because the Emperor did not like French theatrical performances, but because the French company had dispersed during the mourning for the Empress, and as yet no one had taken the trouble to get another together again.

The Court left Gatchina on 4 November and spent the 5th at Tsarskoie Sielo, that day being the anniversary of the apoplectic attack that had proved fatal to Catherine II. The persons who still genuinely regretted her found a sort of satisfaction in praying for her soul in a place where, more than in others, everything reminded one of her, and the time of year lent to the general aspect of this lovely spot, so reminiscent of her, the air of mourning that befitted the occasion.

It was the last day of the mourning, and as soon as the Court arrived in the Capital, habits were adopted quite different from those of the year that was over. Both the private and the State apartments of their Majesties had been done up, and the theatre of the Hermitage, to which Catherine II had only admitted a chosen few, was opened to all whose rank permitted, including the officers of the Guards. The Emperor and his family were accompanied by the greatest pomp into this place which Catherine II had tried to keep free from anything of the kind.

Four weeks before her confinement, the Empress received the news of the death of her father, the reigning Duke of Wurtemberg. She spent these last four weeks in retirement, which did not, however, prevent the Emperor and the rest of his family from appearing in public as usual.

The King of Poland died at the beginning of January 1798. For his own sake, it was hardly to be regretted, for his life was not much pleasure to him. Although he had never dared to aspire to the throne to which Catherine II had raised him, he was nevertheless a king and had had plenty of time to accustom himself to his kingship, so that the part that he played at St. Petersburg could not but be painful to a man of his intellect and feeling. He owed his living to the Court ; his home was an Imperial residence—the Marble Palace in winter and the castle of Kamiennyï-Ostrov in the summer—and obliged frequently to appear at Court, he was there exposed, like everyone else, to the fluctuations of temper to which the Emperor was subject, only that at his age, and in his position, they must

have been much more difficult to bear. He received a great deal of company at his own residence, and his death was a loss to St. Petersburg society. He died of apoplexy in precisely the same manner as the Empress Catherine, and was buried in the Catholic Church of St. Petersburg with all the honours due to his rank.

On the 28th of this same month of January, the Empress gave birth to a son who was christened Michael, in accordance with a vow that the Emperor had made. It had been no very difficult matter to turn his eager and ardent imagination in the direction of mysticism, and some of the persons in his immediate circle had taken this task upon themselves. On the very first day of his reign it was declared that a sentinel on guard at the Summer Palace had had a vision of the Archangel Michael, into whose mouth words had even been put, the purport of them, however, not being precisely known. Be this as it may, the destruction of the Summer Palace was determined upon shortly afterwards, and the Emperor, on his return from Moscow, laid the foundation stone of the Mikaïlovski Palace on the spot where the Summer Palace had stood.

During the whole of his reign he devoted special attention to the building of this edifice, and to a great extent disordered his finances by his impatience to complete it and the luxury he lavished on it, and it was hardly ready for him to enjoy before it became his tomb, and was for this reason abandoned by his successor. At the time of the pretended apparition the Emperor had vowed to give the name of Michael to the son that he might perhaps yet have.

Shortly after the Empress's confinement, the Duke d'Enghien came to St. Petersburg to join the Prince de Condé, his grandfather, who had already been there two months, and he at once appeared at Court, as the Prince de Condé had done on his arrival. His first appearance was at a ball at the Hermitage.

During the summer of 1797, after the Peace of Campo-Formio, concluded between Austria and France, the Emperor Paul had offered to Condé's army, which was thus rendered

inactive, service and grants of land in his Empire, which offer was eagerly and gratefully accepted. Prince Gortchakov[1] went to take command of the army on the Danube, and led it into Volhynia, where it arrived towards the end of the same year. The Duke d'Enghien marched with it, and only came to St. Petersburg after having established it at Doubno, where the Prince de Condé had been waiting to receive it ; Count Chouvalov had been sent across the frontier to meet the Prince, with some pelisses that he had instructions from the Emperor to present to him. On his arrival at St. Petersburg, his Serene Highness was taken to the Taurida Palace, the Tchernychov Hotel, which the Emperor had bought to make him a present of, and over which the name, *Hôtel de Condé*, could already be deciphered, not being quite finished. The Prince was informed that a supper had been prepared for him and that he might invite to it whomsoever he thought fit.

The next day his Highness received visits from the two Grand Dukes and all the high officials. The Emperor conferred on him the ribbon of the Order of Saint Andrew and the Catholic Grand Priorship of the Order of Malta. No one has ever quite known what occasioned the coolness which his Majesty very shortly afterwards manifested towards him.

The Prince de Condé and the Duke d'Enghien left St. Petersburg at the end of February, or the beginning of March 1798, for Doubno. In the course of the year, several tracts of country, which had been suggested as suitable for the colonial settlements that had been promised, were visited by the Marquis of Montesson, but nothing came of the scheme. In 1799 the army took an illustrious share in Marshal Souvorov's glorious campaign, but, after the campaign, the feeling of the cabinet of St. Petersburg changed and the Prince de Condé, learning that Russia was now inclined to favour Buonaparte, entered into negotiations with England to hand his army over to that Power, by

[1] Alexander Ivanovitch (1764–1817), nephew of the great Souvorov, and later Minister of War.

whom, as a matter of fact, it was accepted. But Paul I, having received timely notice of these negotiations, forestalled the Prince's resignation by a *prikaz*[1] pronouncing the disbandment of the corps. The army was then in Lower Austria, and England was not long in disbanding it in her turn, for the noble army was gradually dissolving of its own accord, through the numbers of its units who returned to France.

The Empress's confinement had been trying but not dangerous. As she had lost her usual accoucheur, one had been sent for from Berlin, and this man, bribed no doubt by those who wished to undermine the influence of the Empress and Mlle. de Nelidov, notably by Koutaïssov, declared to the Emperor that he would not answer for the Empress's life if she should have another child. This statement was the original cause of the various intrigues of the year.

The Empress had hardly got over her confinement when she received the news of the death of the Duchess, her mother, just as she was expecting her in Russia. She was overwhelmed by this trouble and the Emperor then showed himself all that an affectionate and thoughtful husband could be. They left for Pavlovsk in the middle of April, and, at the beginning of May, the Emperor and the Grand Dukes Alexander and Constantine went to Moscow, where a muster of troops were to carry out manœuvres. The princes were to go thence to Riazan. The Emperor spent five or six days at Moscow, where the public thronged to the manœuvres. These were carried out in the finest of weather and the people showed themselves eager to celebrate His Majesty's visit by balls and other rejoicings.

Mlle. de Lapoukhine, who had attracted the Emperor's attention the previous year at the Coronation, reappeared before him, more beautiful than ever, and Koutaïssov fanned

[1] Order. With regard to this army, Rastoptchine wrote: 'The Engineer officers and the surgeons are the greatest acquisition in this corps, for the rest of them are mightily ignorant fellows.' (*Archives Vorontsov*, viii. 185.)

to the utmost the flame of the Emperor's admiration, so that he quitted Moscow madly in love with her, and fully determined to bring the object of his passion to St. Petersburg.

I must not omit to record here an incident, of great interest to the Princess of Taranto, which took place about this time. My husband appealed to the kind hearts of the Grand Duke Alexander and the Grand Duchess Elizabeth on behalf of the unfortunate Princess, and they very generously came to her assistance with a gift of 12,000 roubles, stipulating only that she should keep their kind act a profound secret. Their munificence rendered her as happy as it was possible for her then to be, by affording her the means of assisting her sister and her family.[1] Her tears of gratitude overjoyed me. She dined a few days later at the Taurida Palace, and chance decreed that she should be placed at table opposite to the Grand Duchess Elizabeth, who frequently looked at her, with a very sympathetic expression, and appeared to take great interest in her, for it is always a pleasure to see those whom one has rendered happy. The kindness of her expression attracted the attention of M. de Plechtcheiev, who sat near her, and he mentioned it to the Princess, who had difficulty in concealing the gratitude with which her heart was overflowing. She brought me a flower that the Grand Duchess had sent me by her.

I spent the summer of 1798 at a country-house on the Peterhof road, with Mme. de Tolstoy and Mme. de Tarente. As time passed, I grew more and more attached to Mme. de Tarente, whose warm heart and fine disposition responded generously to my affection.

4

Lord Whitworth, the English Minister, was staying

[1] On the authority of Rastoptchine, Paul I himself is said to have given a sum of 200 ducats for the journey from London to St. Petersburg of the Comte de Crussol, the Princess's nephew. Rastoptchine wrote touching this matter: 'His aunt is deserving of the greatest respect and esteem, by reason of her behaviour, both past and present. I often have the opportunity of seeing her, and, to my surprise, I see nothing French about her, save the name.'

near to us, and must be included among my Recollections, although he was one of the most painful of them. He had for a long time pretended to a great passion for Mme. de Tolstoy, that is to say, he wished to ruin her, but he masked his intentions in precisely the manner that is most seductive to a good woman. He never uttered a word that could shock or hurt her feelings, and was all respect and kind attentions to her. This went on for several years ; and when at last she noticed the feeling that she inspired in him, she merely avoided him. Nevertheless his proximity was very displeasing to me, for I have never been able to tolerate any man's passion for a married woman. I regard such a thing as even criminal, especially in a man of nearly fifty.[1] By this time, though Lord Whitworth's behaviour had not so far been reprehensible, it was plainly to be seen that he was losing his head. I took care not to mention the matter to Mme. de Tolstoy, for it would have been a dreadful thing to disturb her feeling of security. But the end justified my fears.

The Emperor came back towards the end of June, and the Empress and Mlle. de Nelidov went as far as Tikhvine to meet him. Both were struck by the change in his manner towards them. Their Majesties returned together to Pavlovsk, where the Empress had prepared an entertainment to celebrate the Emperor's return. It was at this entertainment that Mme. Chevalier, the actress, who afterwards played so important a part at St. Petersburg, made her first appearance. In a part of the garden, known as *Sylvia*, where several walks converge in a round open space enclosed by hedges, a different theatrical performance was given at the entrance of each walk. In one place a comedy scene was acted, in another a scene from a ballet, and in another one from an opera, and so on. After pausing at each performance, the Emperor arrived at the last walk, where stood a little cottage, the original Pavlovsk, which for that reason had always been preserved intact.

Here Count Wielhorski, disguised as a hermit, after

[1] Charles Lord Whitworth was born in 1760 and died in 1825.

paying him a few graceful compliments, invited him to enter his hermitage. The Emperor followed him in and found behind the cottage an orchestra, accompanying the chorus from 'Lucile,' [1] *Où peut on être mieux qu'au sein de sa famille*,[2] sung by all the Grand Duchesses. Save for the inappropriateness of it, it was very good, but never had the Emperor brought back home to his own feelings so little befitting a father.

A supper in the Empress's little garden, accompanied by music, terminated the entertainment. The weather had been perfect for it, and it would probably have delighted the Emperor, had he, as usual, been glad to return home. But he, in whose honour it had all been prepared, was present against his will, and the Empress already foresaw the storms that awaited her.

The month of June came to an end and the Emperor showed the liveliest impatience to be at Peterhof. The more or less pleasure that he found in his stay at Pavlovsk always served the courtiers as a criterion of the degree of favour which the Empress was enjoying. Unfortunately the Empress was attacked by tertian ague just when the Court was due to leave for Peterhof. This contretemps irritated the Emperor excessively, and he gave way to such ill temper that he almost convinced himself she was pretending to be ill to annoy him. He did not trouble to hide his ill temper from her, and this was only the beginning for her of a long series of troubles.

In the meantime the Emperor exhibited all the symptoms of passion of a young man of twenty. He confided his sentiments to the Grand Duke Alexander and talked to him of nothing but Mlle. de Lapoukhine, taking delight in detailing to him all that he felt, his imaginative dreams, his hopes, his projects and emotions.

'Just fancy,' he said one day to his son, 'how much in love I must be: I cannot look at poor hunchbacked

[1] A comedy in verse in one act, the words by Marmontel, and the music by Gretry.

[2] 'Where can one be so happy as at home among one's own?'

Lapoukhine without my heart beating faster, just because he has the same name as she.'

The M. de Lapoukhine alluded to was a gentleman of the Court, hunchbacked and most uninteresting, who was only a very distant connection of Mlle. Lapoukhine.[1]

The two Princes of Wurtemberg, the brothers of the Empress, arrived in St. Petersburg about this time. They were in the service of Austria, which Power, having declared against France, was anxious to persuade the Emperor to ally himself with her, and begged the Empress, through her brothers, to use her good offices with him. She, delighted at the importance thus attributed to her, eagerly consented, and won Prince Bezborodko to her cause. He, out of courtesy to her, supported her in her entreaties to the Emperor, but his Majesty replied that 'He wished to consolidate the happiness of his empire before interfering in the affairs of his neighbours.' This wise answer did not satisfy them, so Prince Bezborodko, knowing the Emperor's weakness for ceremonies and display, proposed that he should become a patron of the Order of Malta, and then declare himself Grand Master. The Emperor enthusiastically fell in with this suggestion, which placed him under the necessity of espousing the interests of Austria.

The brilliant campaign of the following year, in which Marshal Souvorov reconquered Italy, was the result of this alliance, and likewise the proposal of the Archduke Palatine for the hand of the Grand Duchess Alexandrine.

As soon as the Empress recovered, the Court went to Peterhof. It was there that the changes were effected which removed from power all the persons whom the

[1] In August 1798, Mlle. Lapoukhine's father was appointed Procurator General; a few days later he received as a present the beautiful house of the deceased Admiral Ribas on the Neva Embankment, and was made a member of the Council. The next month he became acting Privy Councillor and five months later Prince with the title 'Serene Highness,' receiving, in addition, an estate with 8000 inhabitants, the portrait of His Majesty, the Grand Cross of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem, and the ribbon of the Order of St. Andrew, set in diamonds. 'It is a passion of the days of chivalry,' wrote Count Rastoptchine to Count Vorontsov in November 1798.

Empress favoured and who in turn supported her. Mlle. de Nelidov left the Court at Peterhof and withdrew to the Community. De Buxhoewden, her friend and protégé, who was military Governor of St. Petersburg, lost his post, and was soon afterwards banished to his estates in Livonia. Mlle. de Nelidov, who was an intimate friend of his wife, followed them into banishment.[1]

Count Nicholas Roumiantsov, then Grand Master of the Court and afterwards Chancellor, and whom the Emperor also regarded as a faithful adherent of the Empress, was about to be exiled, but the decree was revoked through the intercession of the Grand Duke Alexander. The respite, however, was only temporary, and he was banished some months later. It was Count Nicholas Roumiantsov who, when he was Minister for Russia at Frankfurt, had been deputed by the Empress Catherine to arrange the marriage between the Grand Duke Alexander and Princess Louise of Baden. The day that the Emperor pronounced the decree for his banishment, the Grand Duke Alexander went up to the Grand Duchess Elizabeth as the party were going downstairs for the evening walk, and said to her hurriedly :

' Thank my father when you are walking with him ; it is for our sakes that he has revoked the order for the exile of Count Roumiantsov ; I cannot tell you any more at present.'

The Grand Duchess, who never took part in any intrigues, and only heard of them for the first time when their results became known, was very much astonished, but, nevertheless, did very gracefully what her husband had told her. The Emperor received her thanks graciously and said some very kind things to her on the subject. They got down at *Mon Plaisir* and, while they were walking out on the

[1] To the castle of Lohde, in Esthonia, sadly famed on account of the tragic end in 1788 of the Princess Augusta of Wurtemberg, née Princess of Brunswick, *Zelmire*, as Catherine II called her. To remove her from the brutalities of her husband, brother of Paul's second wife, the Empress sent her to this castle, where, seduced, perhaps violated, by old General Pohlmann, who was keeping guard over her, she died in childbed, for lack of the necessary attentions. (See an article by Princess Chakhovskoy, in the *Revue* of 1 November 1908.)

terrace, the Empress took the Grand Duchess Elizabeth aside and said to her :

' Where is Count Roumiantsov ? They say he has been sent away. Do you know anything about it ? '

The Grand Duchess Elizabeth ingenuously told her all that she knew. Just then, the Grand Duke Alexander, who would have liked to spare his mother the knowledge of the Emperor's ill-feeling towards Count Roumiantsov, and who, as he came up, had heard what they were talking about, reproached the Grand Duchess with some asperity for having mentioned the matter to the Empress. Her Majesty retorted sharply : ' When everybody turns against me, are you sorry that your wife is the only one to trust me ? '

The reproach was unmerited, but her words deeply touched the Grand Duchess, who would have liked to be able to console the Empress, the more so because, since she had been unhappy herself, her manner towards her had lost its haughtiness.

The stay at Peterhof was prolonged that year into the month of August. While the birthday festivities were proceeding, I went to Court with my two friends and Mlle. de Blome, niece of Baron de Blome, the Danish Minister. The Grand Duchess Elizabeth allowed me to meet her one morning, in the English garden, where she came with the Grand Duchess Anne, and I with my company, and I had a conversation alone with her, which reminded me of happy times. It was the last of the kind.

The Court spent another fortnight at Pavlovsk, and went thence to Gatchina. Fond though the Emperor was of this latter residence, where he always remained until very late in the year, he left this time in six weeks, for the time of Mlle. Lapoukhine's arrival was drawing near. The state of excitement he was in was doubtless the reason why his state entry into the town was more a solemn function than usual. He left Gatchina at the head of the Guards and other troops, who always mustered in the autumn for the manœuvres, and they and the Court performed the journey in two days, spending the night at Krasnoie-Sielo, where

the troops camped out and the Court occupied an old log castle. The weather was fine and the route, which passed through a prettier country than the ordinary road from Gatchina to St. Petersburg, lent quite a festive appearance to their progress.

The Grand Duchess Elizabeth was suffering a great deal just then, for she was at the commencement of her pregnancy, and the jolting of the carriages on the bad road caused her apprehensions which she was obliged to conceal, not thinking her condition sufficiently advanced for her to mention it. She thought for a time that she had injured herself, but everything passed off well.

5

About a fortnight after the Court returned to St. Petersburg, the Lapoukhine family arrived. The father was at once appointed Procurator General in the place of Prince Alexis Kourakine, and his wife was presented with the portrait, that is, appointed a lady in waiting, while Mlle. de Lapoukhine was made a maid of honour. People were no longer surprised at anything, otherwise the appointment of Mme. de Lapoukhine to the rank of lady in waiting would have aroused the most righteous indignation. Not only was she of very undistinguished birth, while her manners revealed a total lack of breeding, but she was known in addition to lead a very irregular life. She was only the stepmother of Mlle. de Lapoukhine, who, with her two younger sisters, had lost her own mother in her childhood. Of her two sisters, one was married to M. Demidov and was quite as pretty as Mlle. de Lapoukhine. She appeared at Court, as a matter of course, as well as the whole family, and even their friends,[1]

[1] M. Ouvarov, who was merely a Cuirassier officer, but the lover of Mme. de Lapoukhine, was appointed the Emperor's aide-de-camp, and shortly afterwards head of the regiment of Knights Guardsmen, the principal Regiment of Lifeguards. (Author's note.) Of a family that up to that time had been obscure, Fiodor Petrovitch Ouvarov (1769–1824) participated later in the assassination of Paul I, and took part afterwards in the campaigns against France, dying in 1824, as General-in-chief of the Life Guards.

and pretended to be passionately in love with the Grand Duke Alexander. The Emperor pleaded her cause with his son and stooped to every device to draw him into an intrigue with her. He even went so far as to take him with him one day to Mlle. de Lapoukhine's, and to lock him, apparently by accident, in a room alone with Mme. Demidov.

She, on her part, did everything that imprudence or depravity could suggest to attract him, but she did not please him sufficiently to make him overlook the disgust with which her conduct inspired him, or to blind him to the unpleasant results that might ensue from relations of the kind with the Lapoukhine family. The Grand Duke held firm, and went to as much trouble to avoid her as she did to try to entangle him.

The Emperor imparted to his passion and his manner of revealing it a chivalrous character that might almost have ennobled it, if he had not combined it with every kind of extravagance. He had just appropriated the Grand Mastership of the Order of Malta, and distributed the Order to all the princes and princesses of his family, allocated dignities in the Order that were already being enjoyed by others, and created new ones, as also commanderships, and multiplied as much as possible the opportunities that all these changes offered for state ceremonials. The Order of Malta was conferred on Mlle. de Lapoukhine, who was the only woman to whom this distinction was granted, with the exception of the Imperial family and the Countess Skavronsky,[1] who married the Count de Litta, Minister of the Grand Master at the Russian Court for several years, through whom the offer of the Grand Mastership had been made to the Emperor.

The name of *Anne,* in which someone managed to discover the mystical meaning *Divine Grace,* became the Emperor's motto, which he had placed on the flags of

[1] Catherine Vassilievna Engelhardt (1761–1829), niece of Prince Potemkine. The Baroness d'Oberkirch mentions her in her *Mémoires* as being a great beauty. She was twice married.

his first Guards regiment, and crimson, Mlle. de Lapoukhine's favourite colour, became also the Emperor's, and consequently that of the Court, the officers of the household and all who did not wear livery being dressed in it. He went to see her twice every day, in a carriage drawn by two horses, with a Maltese cross for its only decoration, and accompanied by a footman in crimson livery. He was supposed to be incognito in this carriage, but as a matter of fact he was so as little as if he had been in his ordinary coach.

Let the reader try to picture to himself, if possible, the impression that all this play-acting was likely to produce on the inhabitants of St. Petersburg. The nation was displeased to see the Emperor prouder of being Grand Master of the Order of Malta than ruler of Russia, and when he added this cross to the arms of the Empire, the fact was made a subject of general jest, as likewise the almost theatrical scenes that the ceremonies of the Order occasioned. Moral disorder had taken the place at Court of the austerity that the Emperor had appeared up to that time to insist upon, he himself setting the example of laxity and encouraging his sons in the same evil courses. In spite of this, however, there was no relaxation in the details of Court etiquette, and it was not difficult to foresee what the end of this order of things must be.

The Grand Duchess Elizabeth had declared her condition in the month of November. The Emperor appeared to be very pleased at the news and the public were delighted. The weddings of the two elder Grand Duchesses, Alexandrine and Helena, were announced, and the Archduke Joseph, Palatine of Hungary, who was to marry the first mentioned, and the Hereditary Prince of Mecklenburg-Schwerin, who was to wed the second, were expected in the Capital. The two princes duly arrived and their visit was an excuse for more fêtes and entertainments than ever, both at Court and in the Capital.

Balls were already very frequent occurrences, as Mlle. de Lapoukhine was passionately fond of dancing. She very much liked waltzing and this dance, that had till then

been prohibited as licentious, innocent though it is, was introduced at Court. Mlle. Lapoukhine found the Court costume uncomfortable to dance in, nor did she admire it, so an order was issued to all the ladies to consult their own taste in the matter of dress, regardless of what had been compulsory hitherto. This order, with which all the young people (except the Grand Duchesses) hastened to comply, was a very sore subject with the Empress, who had up to that time exercised a tyranny that was almost persecution on this particular point, so that there were not lacking those who were glad to see her obliged to follow the universal rule. However, as the reason for the change was of so painful a nature, there were others who thought her really very much to be pitied.

As the Archduke was unable to prolong his stay, the betrothal took place in the month of January 1799, and he left soon after.

War against revolutionary France was at that time preparing. The Emperor had sent out an army of 12,000 men, under the command of General Rosenberg, but the haggling and indecision of the Austrians made him so impatient that he gave orders for the troops to cross the frontier again. Prince Ferdinand of Wurtemberg was thereupon sent to the Emperor to induce him to revoke this order, and finally, everything was arranged according to the wishes of the Austrian Cabinet. The corps was reinforced by 24,000 men, 30,000 were sent into Switzerland, under the orders of M. de Korsakow, and twelve battleships and twenty-four frigates to Holland. The Emperor recalled Marshal Souvorov from banishment and made him Commander-in-chief of the whole army, which set out on its march with 60,000 men, prepared for this very expedition by the Empress Catherine.

Marshal Souvorov came to St. Petersburg before joining the army, and was received by the Emperor with all the distinction due to his merit, and compelled to be present at the frequent entertainments that were being given at the time. No contrast could have been more striking than that

offered by the austere soldier, whose very name inspired the army with confidence, and the feebleness that distinguished this Court of brilliant colour. Souvorov, in the turmoil of a ball, with his white hair and gaunt face, which seemed to bear upon it still the traces of the rigorous exile to which he had been subjected, and the Emperor, dividing his attentions between him and a simple girl, whose pretty face would hardly have been noticeable had it not chanced to win the favour of an Emperor, were a strange sight to watch.

Mlle. de Lapoukhine had a pretty head but a very poor figure ; without being exactly small, she was ill-made and narrow-chested, and had no grace of movement, but she had pretty eyes, well-marked black eyebrows and hair of the same colour. Beautiful teeth and an attractive mouth were her greatest charms. She had a little retroussé nose, but it did not add refinement to her face. Her expression was sweet and kind, and indeed she was kind, and incapable of wishing or doing harm to anyone, but she had little brain, and no education.

She used her influence only to obtain favours. She was not clever enough to extend it to matters of state, though it was not because men were not vile enough, nor because the Emperor was not madly enough in love, that she did not interfere in everything. She frequently obtained the pardon of innocent persons, whom the Emperor had dealt with too severely in a moment of ill temper, and would cry, or sulk, and in this way get whatever she wanted. The Empress always treated her very well, to please her husband ; the Grand Duchesses, the Emperor's daughters, sought her company, and paid her attentions that were unpleasantly conspicuous. The Grand Duchesses Elizabeth and Anne treated her merely with the consideration that politeness demanded, and even this was only after they had had orders to that effect from the Emperor, who had been displeased to see that, at the first ball, they had not spoken to her. On the whole, they avoided her more than they sought her society.

The baseness and cringing that the Grand Duchess saw

around her made her more haughty, and the very idea of appearing to pay court to a favourite or a mistress so disgusted her that she nearly went to the contrary extreme, and she was sometimes justly accused of stiffness. The Grand Duchess Anne, who at that time had unbounded confidence in her sister-in-law, behaved as she did, and for the same reasons.

Meanwhile the Grand Duke Constantine was adding infidelity and libertinism to the ill-treatment that his wife had had to suffer at his hands from the day she was married to him. Having no longer any occasion to fear his father's anger, he formed intimacies unbefitting his rank, and gave little suppers in his rooms to actors and actresses, the result being that the Grand Duchess Anne, who was unaware of his conduct, was attacked by a complaint from which she suffered for a long time without knowing its cause. The doctors declared that she could only be radically cured by a course of the waters in Bohemia, and it was decided that she should undertake the journey in March.

The Grand Duke Constantine left about this time for Vienna, whence he joined the Russian army in Italy. It is only just to him to say that when he knew what result his libertinism had had on his wife's health, he was exceedingly repentant, and tried in every way to make up for the wrong he had done her. But the Grand Duchess Anne, who was justly indignant, and who knew only too well how little dependence was to be placed on his promises, conceived the project of a separation and thought that the journey she was about to make would be a favourable opportunity for putting it into execution. She was going to see her own people again, and thought she would have no difficulty in obtaining their consent, and that she would be able the more easily to come to an understanding with the Grand Duke because he would not be in Russia, and could likewise more easily tell the Emperor and Empress that nothing on earth should induce her to return.

This plan, conceived by a girl of seventeen, and based only on her own earnest desire to see it carried out, was confided

to the Grand Duchess Elizabeth, who, though she foresaw more difficulties in the way than did her sister-in-law, tried to persuade herself of the possibility of its success, since she whom she loved with all the affection of a sister, was convinced that her happiness depended on it.

The Grand Duke Alexander, who had the same feelings as his wife for his sister-in-law, and who was distressed to see her victimised by his brother, entered into her plans, and advised, helped and encouraged her, so that this matter of supremely serious purport was settled light-heartedly by two princesses of seventeen and nineteen and an adviser of twenty.

The Grand Duchess Anne left on 15 March, accompanied by Mme. de Renne, her Grand Mistress, M. de Toutolmine, Master of the Grand Duke Constantine's Court, Mme. de Toutolmine, and two maids of honour, Mlle. de Renne and the Countess Catherine Vorontsov, an exceedingly flighty and imprudent young lady.

The parting of the two Grand Duchesses was a sad one, for in view of the plan they had made, they thought it was for an unlimited period, and was perhaps a last farewell; but those who witnessed it and who knew that the Grand Duchess Anne had orders to return in the autumn, attributed the grief of the two princesses to the uneasiness they might feel with regard to the state of the Grand Duchess Elizabeth, whose pregnancy was nearing its term, and to the danger of a first confinement.

However, she continued to progress as satisfactorily as possible. I used to hear about her from my husband, who had the honour of seeing her often, and once I met her, during the spring, in the Summer Garden, where I was walking with Mme. de Tolstoy and Mme. de Tarente, she being accompanied by Princess Volkonski, one of her maids of honour. I ventured to speak to her of the painful presentiments with which my heart was filled. I had asked her to return to me all the papers she had belonging to me, but she told me she had burnt them and commanded me to send hers back to her. I took the liberty of refusing this, adding

that all her papers could easily be returned to her after my death.

The postal officials received the strictest orders from M. de Rastoptchine to allow none of the letters that the Grand Duchesses might write to each other to pass unread ; but, shortly before the departure of the Grand Duchess Anne, an employee, whom the Grand Duchesses knew only by name, found means of letting them know this, and implored them not to make use of invisible ink, nor any of the other usual subterfuges, with the idea of evading the vigilance of the postal authorities, for they were well acquainted with all these methods, and knew how to deal with them.[1] The two Grand Duchesses, who were much touched, and felt very grateful for the warning, the more so because they had fancied that they would be able to write to each other with some freedom in one of these private ways, consequently restricted themselves to a correspondence of the most trivial character.

The Grand Duchess Elizabeth grieved deeply over a separation which was to last seven months, thinking that they might even never meet again ; but she might, with more reason, have grieved over the sorrows in store for herself during this short space of time, had it been given her to foresee them.

Prince Bezborodko died in the month of April and Count Rastoptchine was given the portfolio of Foreign Affairs. As he was already at the head of the Postal Service, he thus found himself in control of the most important offices and enjoyed the Emperor's entire confidence.

Fate so willed it that all the persons that the Grand Duke cared for, or in whom he felt any confidence, were, about this time, one after another sent away from him. I attribute this to fate, because Count Rastoptchine

[1] In her private correspondence with her mother, the Grand Duchess Elizabeth used to use milk instead of ink, and in July 1797, wrote to her : ' Instead of holding it over the fire, you can also put powdered coaldust upon it, which makes it legible, and thus it is possible to write on both sides of the sheet.' (Grand Duke Nicholas M., *L'Impératrice Elisabeth I*, 299.)

afterwards vindicated his action, but, at the time, the Grand Duke's friends tried to persuade him that Rastoptchine was neglecting his interests, or trying to injure him, and it will not seem surprising that all these circumstances combined should have made the Grand Duke believe that he could with justice blame Rastoptchine for the trouble that the removal of all his friends was to him.

Prince Alexander Galitzine was the first. He was sent away from St. Petersburg at a moment's notice, with orders to proceed to Moscow, while the Governor of that city received instructions not to allow him to leave it, and he was likewise ordered to keep Prince Galitzine and all who had anything to do with him under the strictest surveillance.

Prince Galitzine had been Page of the Chambers under the Empress Catherine, who had always been exceedingly kind to him, for he is a very delightful man, and professed for her an attachment that was not far from adoration. Soon after he ceased being a page, she had appointed him lord in waiting at the Court of the Grand Duke Alexander, where his wit and his agreeable manners soon won him the special favour and even the confidence of the Grand Duke. He is short of stature, and this circumstance has earned him pretty generally the nickname of Little Galitzine. He has a merry temper, and a dry wit, but there is nothing of the conspirator about him and he took no greater a share than the general public in any affairs of state. So that the pretext given for the severity to which he was subjected was the countenance he had given to an intrigue between the Grand Duke and Mme. Chevalier. This actress, the mistress of Koutaïssov, made great advances to the Grand Duke, who, attracted by her beauty and her grace, was quite ready to respond. It was asserted that Prince Galitzine had been the go-between in this intrigue and that Koutaïssov, in his jealousy, not being able to revenge himself on the Grand Duke, vented his anger on his emissary. However that may be, the Grand Duke was greatly distressed at the severity with which Prince Galitzine was treated and at his removal from the Court.

The Court left for Pavlovsk at the beginning of May, and the betrothal of the Grand Duchess Helena was there solemnised with great ceremony.[1]

The Grand Duchess Elizabeth gave birth to a daughter[2] on 18 May, and the Emperor appeared to be overjoyed at the news, which was announced to him just as he was receiving some flags captured from the enemy, from an army courier, and hearing of a victory won by Souvorov in Italy.[3] He made a jesting allusion to this and vowed he would be the protector of the infant, who, he declared, would be unwelcome because she was not a boy.

The birth of the little Grand Duchess made me more than happy, and I went to Pavlovsk for the baptism. On the morning of the same day, the Emperor gave permission to the Grand Duke Alexander to ask whatever mark of favour he liked for the members of his Court, and the Grand Duke asked for the Order of St. Alexander for Count Tolstoy, that of St. Anne for M. Adadourov, his Chamberlain, and the Grand Cordon of St. Anne for Countess Chouvalov. As soon as the ukases had been signed and came to the knowledge of Count Rastoptchine, he went to the Emperor and pointed out to him that it would be an injustice on his part not to confer the ribbon of the Order of St. Alexander on my husband, who was the head of his son's household, and who had always served the Grand Duke well and honourably.

The Emperor yielded to his representations and ordered Rastoptchine to remind him of it after the baptism. We, of course, knew nothing about all this. I had spent the night at Tsarskoie Sielo and only reached Pavlovsk in time to follow the Court into church. The ceremony much affected me, especially when the Emperor himself held out the child for the Sacrament of Baptism. He did so with an evident feeling that escaped no one. When I had gone

[1] On 5 May 1799.

[2] The Grand Duchess Marie Alexandrovna, died 27 July 1800.

[3] Over Moreau, at Cassano, 27 April 1799, followed by the occupation of Milan.

back into the drawing-room, to wait for dinner, my husband came up to me and said :

' They are going to give the ribbon of the Order of St. Alexander to Tolstoy, by the Grand Duke's desires. If you are asked whether I ought not to have it, answer that you do not know.'

The Emperor, on going into his study, called Koutaïssov, and said :

' Rastoptchine was telling me this morning of something I ought to do and I have forgotten what it is. Ah ! I remember ! Call Golovine, and bring me the ribbon of the Order of St. Alexander.'

As soon as my husband appeared in the doorway the Emperor came up to him, and said :

' I was about to be guilty of the grossest injustice, and I hasten to repair my son's thoughtlessness, for no one merits his interest and good will more than you do.'

His Majesty ordered Koutaïssov to find the Grand Duke as quickly as he could, and tell him that he had just conferred the ribbon of the Order of St. Alexander on the man most deserving of receiving the distinction. Just then the Empress came in, and the Emperor signed to my husband not to thank her. She was very much taken aback at finding them alone together, and especially at seeing the ribbon with which my husband was decorated, for we have been told since that she had objected to his having it. When she left the room, the Emperor said to my husband :

' I signed to you not to thank her, for I assure you that you have no cause.'

My husband then went to the Grand Duke, who received him with embarrassment, and my husband said ' that it pained him not to be able to regard the ribbon as a mark of the Grand Duke's good will, and that the Grand Duke ought to know him well enough to believe that it was his opinion, and not the ribbon, that he prized ' ; then, impelled by his rather quick temper, he went on to tell him some rather stern truths that a subject ought not to permit

himself, when speaking to his sovereign, whatever may be the uprightness of his intentions, and ended by asking the Grand Duke's permission to leave his Court. The Grand Duke made only a feeble endeavour to dissuade him. From the Grand Duke, my husband went to the Grand Duchess Elizabeth to thank her. She had no suspicion of what had just taken place, and told him to send me to see her.

I found her lying down on her couch and Princess Tchetvertinska with her.[1] My visit was a short one, for the presence of the Princess was a restraining influence; I took leave of the Grand Duchess and went back to Countess Tolstoy's rooms. My husband came to me there soon after and told me all that I have just narrated, which naturally greatly upset me. My husband said that it had been a great effort to him to hide what he was feeling during his visit to the Grand Duchess, for whom he had the profoundest respect. He added that all that was being prepared against her by the Grand Duke's circle was one of the principal reasons that were inducing him to leave the Court, for he knew that he could do nothing to help her.

At first he asked to be allowed to resign altogether, but the Emperor, though he allowed him to leave the Court, would not hear of his leaving his service, and insisted on his accepting some post. So my husband, in order not to disobey, decided to ask for the Presidency of the Post, under Count Rastoptchine.[2] The Emperor granted it to him and obliged him in addition to accept the office of Senator.

[1] Marie Antonovna (1778–1851), married later to Dimitri Lvovitch Narychkine, who was called the 'King of the Greenroom,' and the 'Prince of Punsters,' and who died in 1836, occupying the post of Master of the Hounds. Marie Antonovna was celebrated for her beauty, and her liaison with Alexander I, by whom she had a daughter, Sophie Romanov; brought up in France on account of her delicate health, and passionately beloved by her father. She became affianced to a Count Cheremetiev, but died in 1824, before the marriage took place.

[2] Count Rastoptchine had held it from 31 May 1799. Count Golovine's appointment dated from 6 June 1799.

CHAPTER VIII

1799–1800

1. The Grand Duke Alexander's displeasure—Favour shown to Prince Czartoryski—Victories of Souvorov—The marriage of Mlle. Lapoukhine. 2. Private sorrows—Change in the Grand Duchess Elizabeth—An English governess and a French nobleman. 3. The Grand Duchess Elizabeth and Prince Czartoryski—The accusations of the Empress—Removal of Czartoryski—Countess Golovine suspected of being concerned. 4. Marriages of the Grand Duchesses Alexandrine and Helena—The Grand Duchess Anne's projects of divorce—Entertainments at Gatchina—The Emperor's gloomy presentiments. 5. In retreat—Changes at the Court of the Grand Duchess Elizabeth—The favour enjoyed by the Pahlens—Defection of Austria—Recall of the Russian army—Disgrace and death of Souvorov—Popularity of the Grand Duke Alexander. 6. Countess Tolstoy's romance—Growing irascibility and eccentricity of Paul I—Mourning and sorrow.

I

This sudden change in my position was more painful to me than I can express. It gave rise to a thousand conjectures, each more ill-natured than the last. Our enemies were delighted at the opportunity thus afforded them of carrying their evil designs into effect, and giving their calumnies an appearance of truth.

My husband's departure from the Grand Duke's Court was the first matter on which they exercised their wits, and the following explanation of it was given to the Grand Duchess, though I did not know these details, until long after.

The day after the baptism, the Grand Duke Alexander told the Grand Duchess his wife that the Emperor had left

it to him to say whether my husband (the Master of his Court) or Count Tolstoy (the Marshal) should be decorated with the ribbon of the Order of St. Alexander, that Count Tolstoy was always near his person and fulfilled with indefatigable activity the most troublesome duties of his post, and he had thought that in strict justice he ought to give the ribbon to Count Tolstoy rather than to my husband, who was leaving him ; but that he, being offended at the choice he had made, had asked to be released at once and had exchanged the post he filled at Court for the Presidency of the Post Office, under Count Rastoptchine. The Grand Duke, in his turn, seemed greatly hurt by my husband's behaviour, and especially by this latter circumstance. By suddenly entering a department under the orders of Count Rastoptchine, who was then Prime Minister and apparently all-powerful, my husband seemed to be setting the Grand Duke at defiance, and to be playing a game arranged beforehand.

This was how the Grand Duke chose to take the matter, and he went on with much soreness :

'I would never have believed that Golovine, who I thought was so much attached to me, would have made the ribbon of an Order the pretext for leaving me ! I see very plainly that it is the hope of promotion that tempts him, and he thinks he will be better off under Rastoptchine, and he is right ; for he will be sheltered from all dangers with him ! But I did not expect it of him.'

The Grand Duke, who judged only from the circumstances that I have related, made the Grand Duchess see the whole matter from his point of view. All those to whom their Imperial Highnesses mentioned it agreed with all they said, and the Grand Duchess quite shared the Grand Duke's displeasure with my husband. She did not accuse me, being convinced that all that had happened would be a great trouble to me, and she pitied me and still believed in my real devotion to her. However, people tried to blacken me in her eyes, and an unlucky combination of circumstances contributed to deceive her.

I must go further back to trace the beginning of the events which I am now going to relate.

As far back as the commencement of the preceding winter, the Grand Duke Alexander had made Prince Adam Czartoryski leave the army, and from aide-de-camp to the Grand Duke he had been appointed Master of the Court of the Grand Duchess Helena. Prince Czartoryski had neither inclination nor ability for matters of detail, which were those of prime importance in the Emperor's eyes, and his Majesty having spoken sometimes of giving him the command of a battalion or a regiment, the Grand Duke, trembling lest he should discover the Prince's incapacity for this corporal's work, anticipated the disgrace to which he would in that event have been exposed by obtaining for him the post I have mentioned.

This change, however, brought about no other. The Grand Duke kept up the same intimacy with him as before, and his new office requiring his presence at Court, he followed the Court everywhere. But, in spite of this, and marked instances of the Emperor's favour, the Grand Duke and Prince Czartoryski were both secretly convinced that the Prince would shortly fall into disgrace. Court intrigue and the cringing and contriving of ordinary courtiers were quite foreign to his character (such was the opinion with which he had managed to inspire their Imperial Highnesses at that time), and the Grand Duke was, in fact, his only protector; he neither had, nor sought to win, any other friend. But his favour was not sufficient in this stormy and fantastic reign. The Grand Duke saw looming in the distance the catastrophe that would separate him from his friend, and several months before he had persuaded him to hand over to him papers that it would have been dangerous for Prince Czartoryski to have in his possession.

As soon as the Grand Duchess Elizabeth was about again, the Court left for Peterhof. I spent the summer at a country-house, opposite to Kamiennyï-Ostrov, which had belonged to my mother-in-law,[1] who had died twelve months

[1] This estate on the Tchernaïa belongs at the present day to the Hospice for Foundling Children.

before, and Mme. de Tolstoy stayed there with me. We went several times to Peterhof to the *Te Deum* services, or thanksgivings, held for the successes of our troops. Souvorov was earning immortal laurels, and his name was universally admired and respected. The Emperor conferred on him the title of *Generalissimo* and desired his name to be placed after those of the Imperial Family in the prayers of the Mass.

Rather a curious incident happened at Peterhof. One day when the Emperor was with Mlle. de Lapoukhine, he received a message from the army announcing a victory,[1] and Souvorov added that he was shortly going to send Prince Gagarine,[2] colonel of the regiment, with the flags that had been taken from the enemy, and with more circumstantial details of the matter. This news much agitated Mlle. de Lapoukhine, but she made an unsuccessful effort to hide her emotion from the Emperor, and to deny it. Being unable to resist his importunities and at last his orders, she fell at his feet and confessed to him that she had known Prince Gagarine at Moscow, that he had been in love with her, and that he was the only man of all who had paid her attention in whom she felt any interest. She had not been able to hear with indifference that she was likely to see him again, and she flung herself and him on the Emperor's generosity.

The Emperor listened with great emotion to her confession, and, actuated by a sudden generous impulse, determined to arrange a marriage between Mlle. de Lapoukhine and Prince Gagarine, who arrived a few days later. The Emperor received him very kindly, and placed him in the first Guards' Regiment. Shortly afterwards the news of his approaching marriage was published together with that of his appointment as Aide-de-Camp-General to the Emperor.[3]

[1] La Trebbia, on 17–19 June 1799, in which he defeated Macdonald.

[2] Paul Gavrillovitch, born in 1777, afterwards Aide-de-Camp-General, died in 1850.

[3] According to the tradition preserved in the Lapoukhine family, it was to defend herself from the Emperor's too pressing attentions that the future Princess Gagarine revealed the secret of her heart. Whereupon,

2

Let me go back for a moment to what concerns myself. I cannot keep silence with regard to certain events which became, as it were, a prelude to my sorrows. I experienced a cruel loss in the death of the Countess von Schoenburg, which happened about this time; the Princess of Taranto was my greatest help and comfort on this occasion, on account of the affectionate manner in which she sympathised with my grief. Mme. de Tolstoy often left me to go to Peterhof. Her husband was beginning to throw off the mask, and was insinuating himself into the good graces of the Emperor and Empress by playing the part of an affectionate husband jealous of his wife. The attentions of Lord Whitworth to Countess Tolstoy were becoming more marked, and Count Tolstoy prepared to throw on me all the hateful onus of a part that it would have been impossible to me not merely to play, but even to conceive. It was with unspeakable pain that I saw Countess Tolstoy gradually becoming estranged from me. I pointed out to her the danger into which she appeared to be rushing, but without effect. I no longer seemed to have any influence over her, and she became intimate instead with Mlle. de Blome, who accompanied her in her walks and drives. Mlle. de Blome was the best-natured girl possible, but she was weak and lent herself to imprudences that ought to have been repressed.

As the Empress's birthday was to be celebrated at Peterhof, I thought I ought to appear, to keep myself in countenance, but I was by no means anxious to go. However,

obeying one of his frequent chivalrous impulses, Paul is said to have given orders to Souvorov to send back Gagarine, with the first bulletin of victory. But, after having heaped his young rival with favours, making him at once Knight of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem, Colonel, and his personal aide-de-camp, he was six months before he would give his consent to the marriage. See the *Souvenirs du Prince Paul Petrovitch Lapoukhine, Demi-Frère de la Princesse Gagarine*, in the appendix to the work by Schilder, Paul I, p. 854.

before deciding, I wrote to the Grand Duchess to ask her whether my presence would be displeasing to her, or whether I might still count upon her good graces. I told her that all that was going on made me feel very unhappy, and that I had had nothing to do with the changes that had taken place, and I implored her to reply to me frankly. Countess Tolstoy was entrusted with the letter. The Grand Duchess sent me an extremely kind answer, well calculated to reassure me, and I went to the ball, where I uneasily endeavoured to catch the eye of the Grand Duchess. Her cold and distant look upset me terribly, and I had great trouble to restrain my tears. Mme. de Tarente was almost as much grieved as I myself, for, as she was always with me, she was in a better position than anyone else to understand what I felt.

The next morning I went for a walk in the grounds of Mon Plaisir, where I was sure of meeting with the Grand Duchess Elizabeth, and as I expected, found her there. I implored her to tell me what made her so cold to me, and told her that if I had been able to foresee this, nothing should have induced me to come to the entertainment, but that it was her note, as kind as she was herself, that had decided me to do so. She did all she could to avoid an explanation, and I saw that her angelic heart was grieved to distress me, so I said no more. We separated, and I made a mental vow that I would keep silence, endure everything, and not complain.

Nevertheless, the grief that overwhelmed my heart affected my health. I saw myself cast aside almost entirely by one on whom my very life seemed to depend. The lamentable and dangerous feelings that occupied Mme. de Tolstoy's mind added still more to my distress, and I felt more keenly than ever the value of the friendship of Mme. de Tarente, who became my consolation, my strength, and my support.

In spite of the sadness that seemed to dominate my being, there were moments when I could not help sharing in the good-humoured and amiable gaiety roused by the

Chevalier d'Augard.[1] Mme. de Tolstoy had an English governess for her daughter, who was passionately fond of bathing in the river. We had had a floating bath made in front of our house,[2] and she often went there. One day my husband had a quantity of gudgeon, that had been fished out of a pond, thrown in to purify them, and Miss Emery, knowing nothing about it, quite unsuspiciously dived into the bath, and found herself covered with fish. Her surprise was extreme, and the adventure gave rise to all sorts of jokes. The Chevalier d'Augard, who was staying with us, wrote a delightful parody of the imprecation of Camilla, in which he made Miss Emery inveigh against my husband.[3]

3

At the beginning of August the Court returned to Pavlovsk. It is with difficulty that I can make up my mind to tell here of an infamous intrigue which assailed the fair fame of the Grand Duchess Elizabeth, and caused untold suffering to myself. Prince Czartoryski's intimacy with the Grand Duke Alexander still continued, and served as the handle for the vile calumny with which malevolence attempted to besmirch her reputation. Her mother-in-law, always jealous of her charm, lost no opportunity of injuring her, and Count Tolstoy, while acting the part of a zealous and faithful servant to their Imperial Highnesses, was the Empress's prime confidant, her spy, and her instrument.

Up to this time, the Emperor had been uniformly kind to the Grand Duchess Elizabeth, and since the birth of her baby he had frequently asked for detailed news of the little

[1] A French émigré, a most estimable old man, who had been a friend of Madame Elisabeth, and was a member of a Christian society formed to combat the new philosophy. The Empress Catherine, on the recommendation of M. Grimm, sent for him to St. Petersburg, to write memoirs about Russia. (Author's note.)

[2] Nikolskoïe was the name of our country-house opposite to Kamiennyï-Ostrov. (Author's note.)

[3] *Vide* Corneille's *Horace*.

Grand Duchess, and had urged her to have a son. During this last stay at Pavlovsk, the Empress commanded the Grand Duchess Elizabeth to send her little daughter to see her, although the baby was only three months old, and the Grand Duke's residence was rather a long way from the castle, and of course she had to obey. On her child's return, the Grand Duchess learnt from the ladies who had accompanied the infant that the Empress had taken it in to the Emperor. The Grand Duchess, who had no suspicion of the storm that was gathering over her head, felt kindly towards the Empress for her demonstration of affection, and saw in it only a wish to accustom the Emperor to his little grand-daughter. She was greatly deceived, as she soon discovered, but the authors of her trouble were still able to hide part of the truth from her, and to turn her indignation against those who least deserved it.

Count Rastoptchine and M. Kouchelev were in the salon adjoining the Emperor's study when the Empress suddenly appeared, carrying the little Grand Duchess in her arms. She said to them :

' Isn't she a delightful child ? ' They bowed in acquiescence, and she then entered the Emperor's study, from which she emerged in a quarter of an hour, more quickly than she had gone in. Koutaïssov came out and called Rastoptchine to his master, saying to him in Russian :

' Heavens, what made this wretched woman come to upset him with her atrocious insinuations ? '

Rastoptchine went into the Emperor's room and found him in a violent rage.

' Go, sir, and write as quickly as you can an order to send Czartoryski to the regiments in Siberia. My wife has made me doubt the paternity of my pretended grandchild. Tolstoy knows as much about it as she does.'

Rastoptchine refused to obey, and pointed out to his Majesty that his words were horrible calumnies, and that the sending away of Prince Czartoryski would cast a lasting reflection on the Grand Duchess, who was as virtuous as she was innocent. But he was unable to shake the Emperor's

decision. So Rastoptchine, seeing that he could not dissuade him, contented himself with saying that his hand should never trace such an iniquitous order, and left the room. His Majesty wrote him a note, giving him all the evidence that went to justify his orders, but Rastoptchine still refused to give way, and, when the Emperor's great rage had calmed down, he persuaded his Majesty merely to remove Prince Czartoryski, without violence, and to appoint him Minister to the King of Sardinia.[1]

The very next morning the Grand Duke Alexander learnt from Prince Czartoryski that he had received orders to leave Pavlovsk that day and to start very shortly for Italy, in the capacity of Minister from the Court of Russia to the King of Sardinia, who, forced by the troubles of the revolution and by the war to leave his own States, was wandering about the various countries of Italy in which quiet still reigned.

The Grand Duke was aghast. The appointment was too much like a banishment to be misunderstood, and neither he nor Prince Czartoryski was deceived for a moment. He hurried at once to his wife to share his trouble with her, and both racked their brains in conjectures as to what could have brought about the dreaded result so precipitately. Their Imperial Highnesses took leave of the Prince during the afternoon. Conversations had been repeated to them which proved that some persons were attempting to explain his departure in a manner that cast a reflection on the Grand Duchess, who was bitterly hurt and still bore on her face the traces of her feelings when she appeared in the evening before the Emperor.

When she entered the room where the Grand Duchesses usually waited for him, without saying a word he took the Grand Duchess Elizabeth's hand, turned her face to the light, and stared at her in a most offensive manner.

[1] In his *Mémoires*, Paris, 1887 (I. 102), Prince Czartoryski alludes very discreetly to the chapter of his relations with the Grand Duchess, and (I. 188) makes no mention of her whatever as having had anything to do with his appointment at the Court of Sardinia.

From that day forth he did not speak to her for three months.

On the evening of the same day, Count Tolstoy, who seemed to be taking the most sympathetic interest in this matter, reported to her the equivocal remarks that the Emperor had made to him and which proved that some one had succeeded in making him doubt the purity of the Grand Duchess's conduct. Count Tolstoy offered to unravel the thread of the intrigue, and this is what he assured her he had learnt from Koutaïssov :

The day when the Empress carried the little Grand Duchess to the Emperor, Koutaïssov and M. Rastoptchine were in his Majesty's room with him, and the Empress had pointed out to the Emperor how strange it was that the Grand Duchess should be dark, when the Grand Duke Alexander and the Grand Duchess Elizabeth were both fair. When she had gone out of the room, the Emperor had remained alone with Count Rastoptchine, and the latter, on leaving his Majesty, had had the order for Prince Czartoryski's departure written and made out.

From that account it looked as if it were Count Rastoptchine who had suggested to the Emperor suspicions with regard to the Grand Duchess. But who could have suggested them to him ? There had never been any inimical feeling between the two men, and Prince Czartoryski had never, up to that time, had any occasion to complain of Rastoptchine's treatment of him. So that it could only have been at the instigation of my husband, who had for a long time seemed to disapprove of Prince Czartoryski, and who, moreover, doubtless desired to revenge himself on the Grand Duke. All that we had done to hinder the intimacy of the Grand Duke with the Prince was recalled, and as for me, I had never hidden my feelings with regard to him, but had shown him on every occasion that I preferred to act up to my principles rather than curry favour by sacrificing them. It was supposed, however, that I had been influenced by other motives, and it was settled that my husband and I had sacrificed the reputation of the Grand Duchess to

satisfy our personal feelings of enmity, and for the pleasure of revenging ourselves.[1]

I was greatly distressed over the Grand Duchess's troubles and had not the slightest suspicion that I was accused of being their author. She, however, thought it proved beyond all doubt that I was the cause of the vexations that she was enduring, for when one is very young the most unlikely things appear the most probable. We believe in a virtue that is sublime, and when some circumstance reveals to us the bad side of human nature, we are more ready to believe in the blackest crime than in a cleverly-woven intrigue.

This first disappointment in friendship touched the Grand Duchess's heart and life too nearly for it not to be a great grief to her. She thought herself deceived and betrayed by a person whom she had dearly loved and whose attachment to herself she had believed unalterable. Her reputation was assailed, for the Emperor's behaviour to her was a public accusation; nothing could defend her, and she thought she owed it all to me. Soon, however, her indignation lent her strength, and made her determine not to allow those who had distressed her (whoever they might be) to see that they had succeeded in their aim, and this enabled her to show a calm front to the world. Privately, she tried to cast all thought of me and of my husband out of her heart, thinking we were henceforward her declared enemies.

4

Some days before the Court left Pavlovsk for Gatchina, the Empress prepared an entertainment for the Emperor, on the occasion of the approaching weddings of the Grand Duchesses Alexandrine and Helena, who would not be

[1] This is, as a matter of fact, the opinion to which the Grand Duchess continued to cling, as is proved in her letter to her mother 16/27 August 1799, in which, while protesting her innocence in very vehement terms, she denounces the treachery of Countess Golovine. (Grand Duke Nicholas, *L'Impératrice Elisabeth*, I. 359.)

leaving Pavlovsk with the Court again. The Empress intimated to the Grand Duchess Elizabeth that she wished her to take part in a farewell cantata that the Grand Duchesses were to sing to the Emperor; but the Grand Duchess Elizabeth, on whom, under the circumstances, such a suggestion jarred exceedingly, respectfully informed the Empress that she could not possibly address the Emperor in terms of flattery and affection just when he had caused such distress to the Grand Duke, and had tarnished her own reputation by word and deed, and insulted her by conspicuous neglect. The Empress pretended to be surprised when the Grand Duchess spoke of the attacks on her reputation and assured her that she had not heard any mention of anything of the kind, but she did not protest against the Grand Duchess's very positive refusal to take part in the entertainment.

While the Court was awaiting the arrival of the Archduke Palatine and the date fixed for the marriage of the Grand Duchesses Alexandrine and Helena, the Grand Duchess Elizabeth received from the Grand Duchess Anne an intimation, without further explanation, of her immediate arrival, and the day before the marriage of the Grand Duchess Helena, at the beginning of October, the Emperor himself brought the Grand Duchess Anne to her apartments, which were next to those of the Grand Duchess Elizabeth. They showed their delight at seeing each other again unrestrainedly, and for the moment, as he spoke a few words to the Grand Duchess Elizabeth, the Emperor seemed to have forgotten his severity.

'Here she is,' his Majesty had said, in a very satisfied tone, presenting the Grand Duchess Anne to the Grand Duchess Elizabeth; 'she has come back to us, after all, and looking splendid.' [1]

But the next day he resumed his obstinate silence, and did not speak to the Grand Duchess for six weeks.

As soon as the Grand Duchesses were alone, the Grand

[1] The Grand Duchess Anne's return took place on 11 October 1799.

Duchess Elizabeth told her sister-in-law how surprised she was at her sudden return, for which she had not been in any way prepared, and asked her what had become of the plans that she had made on leaving.

She then learnt from the Grand Duchess Anne that the Emperor must have been informed of her intentions, for, before she had had time to do anything towards putting them into execution, M. de Rastoptchine had written to M. de Toutolmine, who accompanied the Grand Duchess, letters holding out the direst threats, should the Grand Duchess ask the Emperor's permission to remain longer in Germany, that these letters had been repeated, and that finally one had arrived definitely fixing the Grand Duchess's return for the date of the wedding, and that, intimidated by these threats and by the fear of drawing down the Emperor's wrath upon the persons accompanying her, she had decided to obey.[1]

The marriage of the Grand Duchess Helena to the Hereditary Prince of Mecklenburg-Schwerin was celebrated on 8 October, and that of the Grand Duchess Alexandrine to the Archduke Palatine eight or ten days later.[2] The Emperor wished the weddings and the state ceremonies and entertainments following them to be carried out with all due pomp and magnificence, but the Castle of Gatchina was not a suitable place for the purpose, being too small to contain decently the St. Petersburg public, and the persons who, by virtue of their rank and condition, were obliged to be present were hardly able to find house-room in the very small town of Gatchina. The distance of the castle, where all the ceremonies took place, from the town, the barely decent accommodation provided for the principal personages at Court, the mud, and the overcast autumn skies, all combined to make the solemnities appear a very dreary

[1] The Grand Duchess Anne did not finally leave Russia until 1801. Her divorce from the Grand Duke Constantine was only formally pronounced in 1820. For a long time she resided at Elfenau, near Berne, and ended her days at La Boissière, near Geneva.

[2] The two weddings were in reality celebrated on 12 and 21 October 1799.

affair to the victims, and rather amusing to those participants and spectators who were more comfortably situated.

One would be inclined to count the heir to the throne and his wife among the victims, for in order to obey the orders of the Emperor, who wished the Grand Duke Alexander to give a ball, it was necessary to turn out the little Grand Duchess and accommodate her in her mother's bedroom.

The festivities continued until November. Fresh entertainments constantly succeeded each other, and should have been the more brilliant on account of the news received from the army. Souvorov received the title of Prince Italiiski[1] and the Grand Duke Constantine, for having been a spectator of Souvorov's victories, that of *Tsesarovitch*, which up to that moment had belonged exclusively to the heir to the throne.[2] The Emperor had announced his intention of spending the whole winter at Gatchina. It was felt how impossible it would be to accommodate a Court as numerous as his during the rigours of the winter, but he was not accustomed to listen to argument, so his advisers had to keep silence, and he thought he had vanquished all difficulties.

The Grand Duchess Alexandrine, now the Archduchess, left with her husband at the end of November. The Emperor showed great emotion on parting from her, and their farewells were very touching. He repeated incessantly that he should not see her again, and that she was being sacrificed, and it is supposed he meant that, displeased, and with good reason, at the behaviour of Austria towards him, he thought he was delivering his daughter into the hands of his enemies. Afterwards people often referred to his farewell to her, regarding it as a presentiment.

[1] Of Italy.

[2] An amplification of the spelling *Tsarevitch*, which belonged to all the sons of the sovereign.

5

I had been living in retirement that winter, my little circle being composed of the Baron de Blome, the Danish Minister, a kind and worthy old man; his nephew and niece; my friends; the Commander de Maisonneuve; a perfectly charming French émigré, the excellent Chevalier d'Augard; Prince Bariatinski, the brother of Countess Tolstoy; and of Count Rastoptchine, who came every day to see us, and kept us informed of what was happening. I tried to distract my thoughts as much as my strength would permit, but the visits of Lord Whitworth disturbed the quiet which I had always sought and preferred.

About this time Countess Chouvalov, who had been sent to Germany to fetch the Grand Duchess Elizabeth, and who had been Grand Mistress of her Court ever since, was removed, and Mme. de Pahlen[1] appointed in her place. This change, which could be attributed, so it seemed, to no special motive, appeared to be the result of a fixed determination to remove from their Imperial Highnesses all the persons to whom they might be attached by custom or affection. The Grand Duke Alexander and his wife had never shown either confidence or friendship to Countess Chouvalov, but she was replaced by a person who was a perfect stranger to them, and who, as they thought, was instructed to watch them, and to report on all their private affairs, and who, on that account and because she was the wife of the Governor-General of St. Petersburg, who seemed

[1] Juliana Ivanovna de Schoepping (1751–1814), married to her cousin, Peter-Louis von der Pahlen, who came of a Swedish family settled in the Baltic Provinces. After a brilliant career in the army and in diplomacy her husband gained, about this time, the confidence of the Emperor Paul. Made a Count in 1793, General of Cavalry, Governor-General of St. Petersburg, and Minister of the Police, in 1800 he succeeded Rastoptchine as President of the Department of Foreign Affairs, becoming, in addition, Director of the Post, and Governor-General of Ingria. All-powerful, he was the leader of the plot which cost the Emperor's life. Dismissed from office by Alexander I, he died in 1826, at Mittau.

to be enjoying the Emperor's special favour, was distrusted by them.

Mme. de Pahlen had a cold, severe, and unprepossessing exterior, and when she was deputed, in spite of her recent appointment, to accompany the Archduchess to Vienna, the Grand Duchess was relieved, by her absence, of the annoyance of having about her a person whom she did not like.

The beginning of the winter was very severe, and in December the influenza, a catarrhal epidemic, which is often dangerous, made its appearance at Gatchina, and likewise at St. Petersburg. The entire Court succumbed to it, and eventually the Emperor took it himself, and it was only then he noticed that there was not a single room in his apartments in which he was properly sheltered from the cold. Compelled to remain in bed, he had his bed set up in a small room without any windows, the only one that would retain the heat of the stoves. He was the more ill-tempered about it because he could only attribute the discomfort he was suffering to his own obstinate determination to remain at Gatchina.

Orders were given at once for the Court to remove to St. Petersburg, and as soon as he was convalescent he left Gatchina with the whole of the Imperial family.

About the same time, the Hereditary Prince of Mecklenburg-Schwein left Russia with his wife, and shortly after, the Grand Duke Constantine returned from the army.

The rapid and victorious progress of our troops seemed to be achieving its object and to be preparing the salvation of Europe, when the Cabinet of Austria suddenly paralysed its glorious advance, and the Austrian army, commanded by the Archduke Charles, failed to join Prince Souvorov, the Generalissimo, as had been promised and arranged. The Emperor would not brook this defection and recalled our army. Prince Souvorov fell ill on the way back to St. Petersburg, and his Majesty, in accordance with his unfortunate character, heaped him with undeserved disgrace. Souvorov was brought to St. Petersburg and lodged, by the

Emperor's order, in the most distant part of the town, instead of in the apartments that had been prepared for him. The Emperor's anger aggravated his complaint and hastened his end, and he died in the spring of 1800. He was buried at the Convent of Nevski, with all military honours. The funeral convoy passed my house, and I never saw a more touching and imposing spectacle. All the soldiery appeared grief-stricken, and the streets were lined by people of all classes, many of whom sank on their knees. The Emperor followed the service for a few minutes. When the customary prayers had been said, the coffin had to be carried into the upper chapel, but the staircase leading up to it was very narrow. While they were seeking some means of overcoming the difficulty, Souvorov's Grenadiers seized the coffin and placed it on their heads, then shouting 'Souvorov must pass everywhere!' carried it to its appointed place.

In January of the same year, my husband handed in the receipts from the Post Office.[1] The Emperor was very pleased and promoted him to the rank of acting Privy Councillor, equivalent to that of General Commander-in-Chief. This rank gave me again the entrée to the entertainments at the Hermitage, and I went to nearly every function, simply and solely that I might see the Grand Duchess in the distance. The sight of her always made me unhappy, but such is the weakness of human nature that I preferred to suffer rather than be banished from her presence.

The Grand Duke Constantine did not remain long at St. Petersburg. The Emperor, being annoyed with the Horse Guards, banished them to Tsarskoie Sielo, and as a crowning punishment ordered the Grand Duke Constantine to drill them.

The life he led there, and in which the Grand Duchess

[1] When he entered upon his duties in this department he found a debt of 700,000 roubles. At the end of two years he had paid these debts and presented to the Emperor a surplus of 300,000 roubles. (Author's note.)

On the testimony of Prince A. J. Viazemski, in the last statement presented to the Treasury by Count Golovine's predecessor, the latter had entered at nearly 500,000 roubles an item of 130,000.

Anne was obliged to participate, was absolutely devoid of the dignity befitting their rank. The Grand Duchess, to please her husband, whose behaviour towards her had in other respects improved, used to go to the riding-school, to be present at the exercises, and the Grand Duke used to take the officers of the regiment into the Grand Duchess's rooms at all and every hour of the day and night. They danced to the harpsichord, and a familiarity reigned in the circle of their Imperial Highnesses that would not have been seemly in a household of much lower rank.

In March the Grand Duchess Anne fell dangerously ill, and was taken to St. Petersburg, so as to be within reach of the nursing that a very long convalescence required.

The winter meanwhile passed uneventfully at Court, and there were even no amusements. The Imperial family seemed to be tired of the entertainments that the weddings had occasioned.

The Emperor, who was very anxious that his love for Mlle. de Lapoukhine should not appear more than a pure and ideal affection, continued his attentions to her, although she was publicly betrothed to Prince Gagarine, whom he heaped with tokens of favour.

The Empress was incessantly busy, but it was either round and round in a circle of such petty trivialities, or else with such lack of success, that her efforts achieved no result worth recording. The Grand Duke Alexander, by fulfilling with scrupulous exactitude the arduous military duties that were imposed on him, pleased his father, and made himself daily more beloved by the public. As head of the regiment and Military Governor of St. Petersburg, he was frequently able to save unfortunates, or at least to obtain for them some amelioration of their lot. The kindness and indulgence of his character were in such striking contrast with that of the Emperor, that he won all hearts, and the more people groaned under the rule of the Emperor, the higher were the hopes they entertained for a future which they secretly prayed for.

Perceiving, from the examples that I have cited and

from the case of young Count Stroganov,[1] whom the Grand Duke had singled out among the gentlemen of his Court, and whom the Emperor had overwhelmed with vexations and humiliations, that his favour was no recommendation in the Emperor's eyes, he resolved to receive only such persons as his military duties obliged him to see. He ceased to admit to his house even the gentlemen of his own Court, for fear of compromising them, and his conduct, the motive of which was understood by all, only increased the appreciation in which he was already held. Count Tolstoy alone, though constantly in attendance on the Grand Duke, and professing great attachment to him, retained his position at Court and in the Emperor's good graces.

The Grand Duchess Elizabeth lived only for her child. The troubles that she had of late been through made her regard as an advantage the isolation in which she lived, and she saw only the few persons who had been left with the Grand Duke Alexander, and some of the maids of honour.

Mme. de Tolstoy was beginning to yield to temptation, and I left off walking out with her in the mornings, not wishing to be present when she met Lord Whitworth.[2] I told her that I could not possibly encourage her weakness, whereupon she would cry, and say nothing, while my remonstrances only produced attacks of nerves. She had in her house a French woman who had been the nurse of her dead child, and this woman was a perfect virago,

[1] Paul Alexandrovitch, the pupil of Gilbert Romme, and a fervent adherent of the republican ideas which, like many contemporary Russians, he tried to reconcile with the principles of a political hegemony, claimed for the nobility of his country. Happening to be in Paris during the Terror, he there wore the Phrygian cap, and when he returned to Russia, he, with Czartoryski and Novossiltsov, formed the *Triumvirate*, which for a long time constituted the secret council of Alexander I. Born in 1774, he died in 1817, when he occupied the rank of Aide-de-Camp-General.

[2] It is probable that, in this intrigue, the English envoy's real object was to penetrate into the intimacy of the Grand Duke Alexander. He had much graver preoccupations of every nature about this time. He was plotting the dethronement of Paul I, and for that object concerting with the beautiful Olga Alexandrovna Jerebtsov, the sister of Zoubov, with whom he was carrying on an intrigue already of long standing.

but Count Tolstoy was particularly considerate and affectionate to her. This abominable woman was constantly making scenes with Mme. de Tolstoy, who often complained of her to her husband, but he always ignored all she said. Finally, at the end of her patience, she told him that she would leave the house if he did not send Thérèse away, at which the Count lost his temper, and went so far as to pick up a knife which was on the breakfast-table, and chase her with it. Their little daughter, who was ten years of age, was present at this dreadful scene, and she fell on her knees and held her father by the legs, while the Countess, in her confusion, rang the bell, thus rendering a footman witness of the quarrel. She left the house and came to me as I was dressing, and her pale, terrified face gave me an alarming fright. She told me that she had made up her mind to go away, that she would join her mother in Berlin, and that nothing whatever should compel her to live under the same roof as her husband. I calmed her as well as I could, and begged her not to precipitate matters, since any violent resolution on her part, however innocent, must inevitably redound to her own discredit. I begged her to bear everything, the more so as she could not disguise from herself what was passing in her own heart.

She remained at my house, and the Count arrived at dinner time, gloomy and embarrassed. I behaved as if nothing had happened, and treated him as usual.

I fell ill, and Mme. de Tolstoy, the Princess of Taranto, and Mlle. de Blome stayed with me. Mme. de Tolstoy offered to read a new novel aloud to us, and we accepted, but at the first emotional scene she began to sob, and fled into the next room. Mlle. de Blome followed her, and, as they did not return, I went to see what was happening. I found Mlle. de Blome with her hands clasped, imploring Mme. de Tolstoy to tell me everything. She took my hands, and said :

'I will come back early to-morrow.'

I pressed her hand affectionately, and as a matter of fact she did appear, at ten o'clock the next morning, in my

room. After locking the door, she fell on her knees in front of me, shed a torrent of tears, and confessed the love that she had no longer strength to fight against, and which the conduct of her husband seemed to excuse.

'You are going to condemn me, I feel sure,' she added. 'I deserve all your reproaches, because I have hidden things from you and have spurned your advice.'

I replied by kissing her and imploring her to cast out of her heart a feeling that would lead to unavailing repentance in the future, pointing out to her that her husband's behaviour, revolting though it was, ought not to detract from the respect she owed herself.

She grew calmer and a smile of content spread over her beautiful face. For the moment she had conquered herself, and my heart was overflowing with delight.

I begged her to let me write to Lord Whitworth and to tell him that she had just confessed her feelings to me, that I regarded him as most culpable, and that I could neither esteem him nor receive him in my house. He sent me such a silly reply that Mme. de Tolstoy herself could not help laughing at it. Very shortly afterwards, Count Tolstoy left our house, because my husband had left the Court, and to cover the meanness of his action, he threw the odium of it upon me, saying everywhere that I encouraged his wife's guilty passion, and was trying to alienate her from her husband. Mme. de Tolstoy received a reply from her mother, to whom she had written asking permission to join her, saying that she approved her decision, so she begged me to ask Rastoptchine to obtain the Emperor's consent to her journey, but I refused, not wishing to be mixed up in a quarrel of this kind. So she had recourse to her brother and the nephew of Baron de Blome. The latter was very well known to Mme. Chevalier, the actress I have already mentioned, who had become Koutaïssov's mistress. Bariatinski obtained from his mother's trustee a diamond ring worth 6000 roubles, and this was offered to Mme. Chevalier, to get her to use her influence on behalf of Countess Tolstoy. All fell out as she wished, to my great regret.

Permission to leave having been granted her, she proceeded to provide Count Tolstoy, by her departure, with an infallible means of ruining me. It is too humiliating to justify oneself, and even more so when one has nothing to reproach oneself with; moreover, I could not speak without betraying Mme. de Tolstoy's feelings, which thought of itself obliged me to keep silence. The moment of her departure was approaching when Lord Whitworth was recalled by his Government.[1] This news troubled me very much, and I begged the Countess to give up a journey which looked like an arrangement between herself and Lord Whitworth, or at any rate to defer it for a few months; but nothing could shake her determination, and she left in the month of April.

Mme. de Tarente was staying with me, and had sent to England for the Comte de Crussol, her sister's youngest son. The Emperor attached this young man to his person as aide-de-camp, and treated him with an invariable kindness and indulgence very unusual with him. The Comte de Crussol fell ill with an abscess in the chest when he was at Gatchina with his Majesty, and his poor aunt sent for him back to St. Petersburg, that she might be better able to nurse him, and gave up her rooms to him.

The Grand Duchess Elizabeth used sometimes to receive Countess Chouvalov late in the evening, more out of consideration for her than for her own pleasure, but soon she had reason to recognise in Mme. de Pahlen a character deserving of her respect, and an attachment to which she could not refuse to respond. Having performed the task deputed to her, by accompanying the Archduchess, Mme. de Pahlen made haste to return to St. Petersburg, and resumed, in the household of the Grand Duchess Elizabeth, the functions that she had hardly had time to become acquainted with.

[1] In consequence of the orders given to Count S. R. Vorontsov, the Russian Ambassador in London, to take the waters *on the Continent.* Further, the English envoy to Stockholm, Hailes, having left his post just then, without having paid a farewell visit to his Russian colleague, the Emperor Paul advised him to take the whole English mission with him. (*Archives Vorontsov*, xl. 115–116.)

As spring approached, the Grand Duke Michael, the Emperor's youngest son, was vaccinated. It was usual, at such times, to remove from the Palace all the children of the Imperial family who had not yet had the small-pox, and the Grand Duchess Elizabeth received an intimation that she was to be separated from her daughter, who was to stay at the Marble Palace for six weeks. The Grand Duchess felt it impossible to obey this order, since to take her child from her was to take away all her happiness, and she let Mme. de Pahlen see her distress. This lady, who was herself an affectionate mother to a large family, seemed to sympathise very sincerely with her.

'And why,' said she to the Grand Duchess, 'should you not yourself go to the Marble Palace with your baby? In your place I would declare that no power on earth should separate me from my child, and I would ask the Emperor's permission to take up my residence at the Marble Palace with it.'

The Grand Duchess, who knew well the Empress's inflexibility in all matters appertaining to etiquette, and, from past experience, had not much reason to expect she would accede to her wishes, had not courage to mention to her a request until then unprecedented in the annals of the Court. However, encouraged by Mme. de Pahlen, she ventured to hazard her proposal, which was treated as fantastic; but the Empress, after having refused her consent several times, at last yielded to the reasonings and entreaties of Mme. de Pahlen, who was much bolder than the Grand Duchess, and promised to speak about it to the Emperor, though she was sure, she said, that he would refuse the ridiculous request. The Emperor, however, agreed to it without the slightest demur, and Mme. de Pahlen had the satisfaction of seeing the Grand Duchess's happiness, while she in her turn never forgot the service Mme. de Pahlen had rendered her, and henceforward became much attached to her.

During the six weeks that the Grand Duchess remained at the Marble Palace, the persons she saw were restricted to Mme. de Tolstoy, Princess Chakhovskoy, her maid of honour,

and Count Tolstoy, who divided his attentions between the Court and the Grand Duchess, feigned an unbounded attachment to the Grand Duchess, and made her the confidante of all his troubles. He entertained her with the recital of all the pretended unhappiness that his wife caused him, and which he could attribute only to me, who, out of hatred and desire for revenge, was trying to separate the Countess from him, and with this end in view had arranged her journey to Berlin. He depicted his domestic troubles in a manner so touching and so plausible to a person prejudiced, as the Grand Duchess was, against me, that she ended by regarding me as a dangerous and scheming woman, and by regretting her past friendship for me and the confidence she had for so long reposed in me.

The Grand Duke Alexander and the Grand Duchess Anne were the only persons from the Court that the Grand Duchess Elizabeth saw at the Marble Palace and the only ones that she wished to see. Her friendship with Princess Chakhovskoy dated from about this time. The latter, who had just broken off, on the eve of its celebration, a marriage in which she would have found no happiness, and to which she had consented without reflection, was delighted to get away from the Court for a time, to avoid the unenviable notoriety which a regrettable incident of the kind always causes, and had asked the Grand Duchess's permission to follow her into her retreat. She was a good musician, and the Grand Duchess loved music, and sang and played herself, so, as she had a good deal of leisure, she took advantage of Princess Chakhovskoy's talent, and sang with her every day, which was the beginning of a friendship which lasted until the premature death of Princess Chakhovskoy, then Princess Galitzine.

Each time that I met the Grand Duchess I received additional proof of the change in her feelings towards me. One day in the spring I was walking in the Court Gardens with my little girl, then four years old, and Count Alexis Razoumovski, when we saw the Grand Duchess approaching. We admired her grace of movement, and the Count said to me:

'Heavens! how winning she looks!' and went to meet her, I remaining meanwhile at a respectful distance. My little girl, accustomed to hearing about her, ran up to her with all the confidence of a child. The Grand Duchess gently pushed her away, and made haste to enter her carriage. Her action hurt me greatly, and my eyes filled with tears, which I choked back, as I did so many others for her sake.

I spent this summer, as I had done the last, at my country-house at Kamiennyï-Ostrov. My neighbours' treatment of me was regulated by the Court barometer; I ought, however, to except Mme. de Swetchine[1] from this indictment, since her friendship for me was always the same. The Court made the usual summer stay at Pavlovsk and at Peterhof, the Emperor's temper growing day by day more irascible, and his conduct more arbitrary and eccentric. One day in the spring (this was before leaving for the country), after his dinner, which was at one o'clock, he was standing on one of the balconies overlooking the embankment, and a bell he heard, which was not a church bell, excited his curiosity. He ordered inquiries to be made, and learnt that it was the dinner bell of Mme. de Stroganov, who lived very near to the Hermitage, whereupon he flew into a violent passion at Countess Stroganov's only dining at three o'clock, and sent an officer of police to her at once, with orders that she was to dine for the future at one. She had company when the police officer was announced, and everyone was at first very much taken aback; but when he had, with great embarrassment and tremendous efforts to refrain from laughing, discharged himself of his errand, it was only the amazement and the terror of the mistress of the house that prevented the company giving way to the merriment that this very novel police order had excited.

The story soon went the round of the town, and, while this and similar rumours gave ill-disposed persons a pretext for supposing that the Emperor was going out of his mind,

[1] Wife of General N. S. Swetchine, a celebrated writer.

the domestic tyranny that he practised exasperated everyone against him. After having the works of Voltaire and Rousseau removed from the shops of the booksellers, he forbade the importation of any books whatever, and the thoroughness with which this order was carried out occasioned a very embarrassing scene at Palovsk.

The Grand Dukes and Grand Duchesses and all the Court were waiting one evening for their Majesties in the Empress's private garden, which was their usual meeting-place before starting off on horseback, an exercise which was much in vogue at the Court that and the preceding year, and they were collected in front of the ground floor windows of their Majesties' apartments. The Emperor was heard to go from his rooms into those of the Empress, and soon after both raised their voices, the Empress speaking tearfully and reproachfully, and the Emperor responding drily. Not an intonation of their voices was lost, although their words could not be distinguished.

The scene went on for some time, and the audience in the garden, who had maintained an unbroken silence and were looking at each other confusedly, began to wonder what would happen next, when the Emperor came out, in a very bad temper, and said to the Grand Duchesses and the rest of the company :

' Come, ladies, mount your horses ! '

They had to obey, without daring to wait for the Empress, who appeared immediately afterwards, her eyes all swollen with crying, and followed the Emperor, looking very contrite and subdued.

The next morning it came out what the scene had been all about. It appears that the Empress had sent for some books, and, not having received an order excepting her from the universal rule, the books addressed to her had been stopped at the Customs. The Empress was informed of this and chose to be offended, so selected just the moment when the Emperor was going out to complain to him of the disrespect that had been shown to her and which he seemed to be authorising ; whereupon the Emperor, although

annoyed and impatient to a degree, gave orders for the mistake to be rectified. It is marvellous that, with so violent and irascible a temper as his was, he bore so long with the Empress's petty demands and her constant breaches of tact and decorum.

After the stay at Peterhof, the Court went to Tsarskoie Sielo, instead of Pavlovsk, for the end of July and the beginning of August. It was at Tsarskoie Sielo that the Grand Duchess Elizabeth lost her little daughter.[1] The Emperor appeared very much affected by the child's death, and was alarmed and uneasy at the manner in which her grief affected the Grand Duchess, who shed very few tears, but was absolutely heartbroken and disconsolate. The feeling that he showed on this occasion would lead one to suppose that he had not given entire credence to the doubts that had been suggested to his mind, and that had made him behave so unkindly the preceding year.

The death of the little Grand Duchess was a terrible grief to me. My heart was torn by the pain I was suffering, and by the necessity of disguising my feelings. Countess Stroganov[2] came to see me one day and found me sobbing frightfully, at which she could not get over her surprise, knowing that the Grand Duchess Elizabeth had so entirely ceased to care for me.

The child's body was embalmed and carried to the Convent of Nevski, where it lay in state for several days. I proposed to Mme. de Tarente to go and see it, and she accompanied me into the room, all hung with black, in which the dear little body lay, with lighted candles all round it. I went up to kiss the baby's hand, but my lips had no sooner touched it than sobs choked me, for I was overcome by the most painful emotions, and could no longer control myself. My deep attachment to the Grand Duchess and her

[1] 27 July 1800.

[2] Sophie Vladimirovna Galitzine, born in 1774, died in 1845, daughter of Prince Vladimir Borissovitch and of the celebrated Nathalie Petrowna, known as ' Princesse Moustache,' whose father was Count Peter Gregorievitch Tchernichov. A very cultivated woman, and of exemplary character, Countess Stroganov was a great favourite of the Empress Elizabeth.

coldness and injustice towards me were more than I could bear. After a time my thoughts began to grow clearer, and my consciousness of my sympathy with the Grand Duchess in her grief was giving me a kind of mournful pleasure. When Count Tolstoy, who was superintending the funeral obsequies, came up to sprinkle the child's body with spirit, he looked at me with a triumphant smile, and most certainly was revelling in the thought that he had ruined me in the estimation of my young master and mistress. I confess that the sight of him and the expression on his face poisoned my heart afresh.

CHAPTER IX

1800–1801

1. Second visit of the King of Sweden to St. Petersburg—Triple alliance against England—Abrupt departure of the royal visitor—The King in danger of starvation—Balls and entertainments—The Grand Duke Alexander and the beautiful Mme. Narychkine—Zoubov—An agreement between two rivals for her good graces. 2. The Mikaïlovski Palace—A plot that failed—Increasing favour enjoyed by Koutaïssov—Pahlen and Rastoptchine. 3. The last conspiracy—Plan to force the abdication of the Emperor Paul—A painful supper. 4. Death of the Emperor—Despair of the Grand Duke Alexander—The grief of the Empress Marie. 5. The accession of the new sovereign—Death of the Grand Duchess Alexandrine—Strange attitude of the Empress Dowager—Burial of the deceased Emperor.

I

In October, the King of Sweden paid a second visit to St. Petersburg.[1] He had come for the purpose of concluding with the Emperor an alliance against England, to which Denmark was also a party. The Emperor received the King as a relative and ally, and appeared to have forgotten all that had happened on the occasion of his former stay. The two sovereigns discussed affairs amicably together, without intermediaries, and the political business had been satisfactorily arranged when a caprice on the Emperor's part quite destroyed the good understanding between them.

Every evening during the King's visit there was a theatrical performance at the Hermitage. One day they were giving *La Belle Arsène*, a fairy operetta, and some

[1] The King really arrived on 29 November 1800.

charcoal-burners, who appeared in the third act, happened to be wearing red caps. The King, whose opinions with regard to the French Revolution and all those who had taken part in it were quite as decided as the Emperor's, thought he might venture a joke on the subject and said to him :

' It looks to me as if you had Jacobins about you.'

The Emperor, who was probably in a worse temper that day than usual, did not appreciate the joke, and replied very sharply that he had none at his Court and would have none in his Empire. From that moment he treated the King with so much peevish ill-temper and rudeness that his Majesty thought it advisable to cut short his visit to St. Petersburg.

The Emperor vented his ill-temper so far as to send orders for the Court kitchen and attendants who, according to custom, were preceding the King as far as the Swedish frontier, to be recalled, and the King, who had the good sense to take it all as a joke, having heard about this order, put on speed, so as always to gain a few stations on the starvation order that was following him.

' Come, make haste,' he would say to his suite when he stopped to change horses ; ' perhaps we may get a dinner again to-day.'

The Carnival that winter was very lively. The Emperor commanded the Grand Duke Alexander to give balls at his residence, and in the theatre at the Hermitage there were masked balls, admission to which was by a limited number of tickets only, which arrangement kept the company attending them more select than is usually the case at gatherings of the kind.

It was at these balls that the Grand Duke Alexander began to single out the beautiful Mme. de Narychkine.[1] He was still at the preliminary stages of an intrigue with her and thought he was making good progress, when one day, Prince Zoubov, who professed great attachment to him, after chaffing the Grand Duke on the attention he was paying her, and receiving from him in confidence an account of his hopes with regard to her, confided in him in his turn

[1] Formerly the Princess Tchetvertinska.

that he, too, had every reason to be satisfied with the manner in which she received his advances. This mutual confidence resulted in an agreement between them of a very novel character, for the Grand Duke and Prince Zoubov made a mutual promise to keep each other exactly informed of the progress that they were making in their courtship, and gave each other a pledge that the less favoured should withdraw and leave the way free for the one who could produce proofs of better progress in the lady's good graces.

The rivals held to the terms of the agreement with the utmost scrupulousness until, in a few weeks, Prince Zoubov showed the Grand Duke notes that had been slipped into his hand during the polonaise. The latter, who had still only spoken words to report, withdrew without regret, and even expressed contempt for the lady, and for all who could stoop to such devices.

2

The erection of the Mikaïlovski Palace was being pushed forward with the utmost speed. The stage at which it had arrived can easily be imagined if we reflect that the foundation-stone of the building was laid in November 1797 and that the Emperor declared he was going to inhabit it with his Court in February 1801. He seemed to have a presentiment that he would not live in it long, and to be making haste to enjoy the few days of power that remained to him.

On 1 February, the Emperor, with the Empress and the persons of their immediate following, moved into the Mikaïlovski Palace. The Grand Dukes Alexander and Constantine, whose apartments there were not yet completed, were accommodated together in an ante-room, but their wives were to remain for the present at the Winter Palace.[1] All were afraid, for themselves or for others, of the

[1] As soon as the suites were completed, the married Grand Duchesses and the Emperor's children came to the Mikaïlovski Palace too, so that the whole family was there at his death. (Author's note.)

effects of the bad air, but no one foresaw that this palace would be the tomb of the only one who was anxious to take up his abode there.

He was so pleased at having overcome the almost insurmountable obstacles in the way of the gratification of his fancy, that he took advantage of the last few days of the Carnival to give a ball in the new Imperial residence, preceded and followed by theatrical performances on the other days.

The building and furnishing of this palace were a great strain on the Imperial resources and contributed largely to the financial disorder which the Emperor Alexander found awaiting him on ascending the throne. It was furnished with the greatest possible magnificence, and the Emperor Paul enjoyed it for six weeks, but the circumstances of his death rendered the place so odious to his successor that all the ornaments were taken away, and part of them even destroyed.

During the last year of the reign of Paul I great efforts were made to discredit M. de Rastoptchine, and to bring him into disgrace. He now rarely went with papers into his Majesty's private study, but entrusted them to M. Engel, the senior member of his department, and Count Pahlen and M. Narychkine, the Grand Marshal, brought all their influence to bear, too, to bring about a rupture between him and Koutaïssov.

Vice-Admiral Ribas [1] took part in a plot of which Count Panine was the prime instigator. He obtained permission to travel and went to Naples to fetch a wonderful stiletto with which to stab the Emperor. When he came back, Admiral Kouchelev had fallen ill, and Ribas found that the carrying in of the papers to the Emperor devolved on him. The conspirators decided that they would take advantage of one of these private interviews to consummate their crime,

[1] Joseph Mikhaïlovitch, born in 1750, died in 1800, known as an astute and intriguing man. Married to a natural daughter of Betski, the friend of Catherine II, he inherited her fortune. At the time of his departure for Italy, he had just been dismissed, on account of thefts that had been discovered in the Administration of the naval forests.

but the same day Ribas fell ill, and died shortly after. In his delirium, he talked of nothing but these abominable projects and his remorse.

Koutaïssov had grown greatly in the Emperor's good graces; he was promoted to the rank of Grand Equerry, and received the title of Count, and the ribbon of the Order of St. Andrew. Pahlen was preparing with perfidious skill the downfall of the Emperor. He almost despaired of being able to remove Rastoptchine, who was the greatest obstacle in the way of the crime he was meditating, but he nevertheless himself made a last attempt to prejudice the Emperor against him. He asked his Majesty's permission for a private interview, and having obtained it:

'Sire,' he said to his Majesty, 'I come, at the risk of your displeasure, to speak to you of a man who, far from deserving your confidence and your favour, is trying to remove from your sacred person your most faithful and devoted subjects. Count Panine has been blackened in your eyes, in the most unjust manner; Count Rastoptchine is his bitterest enemy.

'Have you finished, sir?' asked the Emperor.

'Yes, Sire.'

'Then leave the room, and do not let me see you again. You will be arrested by my orders.'

And indeed the arrest of Count Pahlen in his own house was ordered within the hour. The Emperor sent for Rastoptchine, told him what had taken place, and ordered him to arrest Count Pahlen and have him taken to the fortress. Rastoptchine begged and implored his Majesty to be more lenient, but all he was able to obtain from the Emperor was that Pahlen should merely be banished to his own estates. A few days later Pahlen reappeared, Koutaïssov having obtained his liberation through hatred of Rastoptchine, and he set to work again, with the assistance of Koutaïssov, to achieve his ends. He asked permission to speak to the Emperor once more, made a full apology with regard to Rastoptchine, pretended to admit that Panine was a suspect, and that he had received foreign Ministers at his house for

secret conferences. In particular he accused the Vicomte de Caraman, the agent of Louis XVIII, and, as a consequence, Caraman was sent away from St. Petersburg, and Louis XVIII from Mittau. Pahlen was triumphant, for, in his fury, he thought it necessary to set the minds of all against the Sovereign. It was one more step towards attaining his goal.

Count Rastoptchine himself facilitated his own dismissal. There was at that time a Piedmontese,[1] who had been, with reason, suspected of evil intentions against the Emperor. He was denounced to Rastoptchine, who tried to get him put across the frontier, but M. and Mme. Chevalier anticipated him, with the help of Koutaïssov. The accused had been imprudent enough to say that this household was in his confidence, and fear of being compromised urged these vile intriguers to denounce him as a criminal, and they managed to get him knouted, mutilated, and sent in chains to Siberia. He died on the way. The man's horrible fate revolted Rastoptchine, and he went to Koutaïssov and reproached him with having acted weakly and unworthily, and with having forgotten the kindness of his master, declaring that, in order to serve his mistress, he was besmirching the Emperor's honour. This infuriated Koutaïssov, who henceforward abetted Count Pahlen in his machinations for the dismissal of Rastoptchine with greater resentment than ever.

[1] The *Journal de Saint Pétersbourg* mentions a Frenchman of the name of Merche, who was knouted, had his nose cut off, and was branded on 14 December 1800, and afterwards sent to the mines of Nertchinsk. Another witness, however (Sybel, *Hist. Zeitschrift*), represents the same individual as having been a Piedmontese, formerly attached to the legation of Sardinia, and in his account he is called Mermes. In a memoir recently published (*L'Assassinat du 11 mars*, 1801: St. Petersburg, 1908; p. 333), A. Kotzebue, who also calls him a Piedmontese, declares him to have been mixed up with Koutaïssov and the actress Chevalier in a vile case of corruption. In a letter to Count A. R. Vorontsov, dated from Moscow, 26 December 1800, Count Dmitri Petrovitch Boutourline speaks of a Piedmontese, named Demerme, who, after a denunciation, subsequently proved to be false, of several persons, was knouted and sent to Siberia. This person, who had come to Russia with Laturbie, the Minister of Piedmont, had been librarian to Prince Andrew Viaziemski. ('They say it is proved that he practised the trade of a spy.' *Archives Vorontsov*, xxxii. 289.)

They attained their object at last, but, though consenting to his dismissal, the Emperor was distressed at losing a man whom he really loved, and he wrote him a note of explanation in which he gave him an opportunity of justifying himself. Rastoptchine replied as became a faithful and innocent subject, but his letter was not delivered to the Emperor, who was told that Rastoptchine was too angry to reply.

Rastoptchine, not being aware of this last infamy, and supposing, from what the Emperor had written to him, that he had a right to go and bid him farewell, sent word to M. de Narychkine, the Grand Chamberlain, to inscribe his name on the list of presentations. M. de Narychkine, who was a worthy accomplice of Pahlen, did not do so, and Rastoptchine, when he went to Court, was not able to see the Emperor. Of course he imagined this to be by his wish, and the Emperor, already misled by the suppressed reply, thought that Rastoptchine was showing his resentment.[1]

3

For some months Count Pahlen had been tormenting and worrying the Grand Duke Alexander to consent to the deposition of his father, and he finally threatened the young Prince with revolution and massacres, assuring him that nothing but the abdication of Paul I could save the Empire and himself. The Grand Duke eventually yielded so far as to allow him to inquire how abdications had taken place in other countries, and it was at this time and for this purpose that Count Panine had had meetings of foreign Ministers at his house, Count Tolstoy being deputed to question them. Pahlen, who had at last succeeded in obtaining the removal of Rastoptchine, the only man who was likely to be an obstacle to his nefarious designs, was bringing his plans to a head. The conspirators met at Prince Zoubov's, but, in spite of all the mystery with

[1] The authoress does not mention the real reason of Rastoptchine's disgrace, which seems to have been brought about by an intrigue he had plotted against Count N. P. Panine. Count Golovine followed his chief into retirement on 20 February 1801.

which they surrounded their schemes, the Emperor knew that there was a conspiracy against him. He sent for Pahlen and asked why he had not informed him of it, but Pahlen audaciously declared that there was nothing serious going on, that a few wild young fellows had allowed themselves to say imprudent things, but that he had brought them to their senses by shutting them up at the Procurator-General's, that his Majesty must rely upon his fidelity, and that he would warn him of the slightest danger, and nip all harm in the bud.

In three days he decided to strike the decisive blow, and presented himself at the Emperor's door, asking permission to speak to him. He entered the study with a despairing expression of countenance, and, falling on his knees, said :

' I bring you my head, Sire—I have just discovered a plot against you. I have had the guilty parties arrested, and they are at the Procurator-General's,[1] but how shall I reveal to you the greatest misfortune of all ? Will your fond paternal heart be able to bear the blow that I am forced to deal you ? Your two sons are at the head of this foul plot ; of that I have every proof.'

The Emperor was thunderstruck and brokenhearted, for he believed it all. His unfortunate temper did not allow him to reflect, and he abandoned himself to fury and despair. Pahlen then tried to calm him, and assure him that it would be more than easy to quash the plot, that he had taken all the necessary measures, and that, in order to frighten the guilty ones, his Majesty had only to sign a paper he had brought.

The unfortunate Prince, in this misery, agreed to everything. He loved his children, and that they should be accused of conspiring against him afflicted him more than the thought of the death with which he had been threatened.

[1] It is true that he had ordered the arrest of all those who were to be actors in the events of the night of 11 March, to make sure they were not sent away. (Author's note.) This detail does not appear to be confirmed by any other evidence that we possess. Pahlen certainly placed under arrest, just at this time, General Andrew Semenovitch Kologrivov, the chief officer of the Hussars of the Guards, but he was devoted to the Emperor.

Pahlen had triumphed. He went to the Grand Duke Alexander and showed him the paper signed by the Emperor, which was an order to arrest him and his brother the next day, and imprison them in the fortress. The Grand Duke trembled with indignation, hung his head, and it was decided that the Emperor should be asked to abdicate.[1]

On the evening of the fatal night the Grand Duke had supper with his father, and sat by his side at table. Imagine the situation—the Emperor believing that his son wished to attempt his life, the Grand Duke thinking his father had ordered his imprisonment! I have been told that during the painful meal the Grand Duke sneezed, and the Emperor, turning upon him a look of mournful severity, uttered the usual compliment:

'Sir, I hope your wishes may be realised.'

Two hours later he was no more.

4

Before entering into the details of this terrible event, I will mention a few circumstances that concerned us. General Bennigsen[2] who was very well known to us, as he had been through several campaigns with my husband during the war with Turkey, was in the habit of coming often to see us. We used to listen with interest to his accounts of the campaign in Persia in the reign of Catherine II, the plans she had made for the conquest of Constantinople, and many details in which it was easy to perceive the wisdom and

[1] In its essentials, this account is confirmed by the other evidence that we possess.

[2] Leontes Augustus Theophilus, later Count de Bennigsen, of a family belonging to the old Hanoverian nobility. Born in 1745, died in 1826, he took part in 1760 in the Seven Years' War as lieutenant in the service of his own country. Having met with reverses of fortune, in 1773 he entered the service of Catherine II, fought under Roumiantsov and Potemkine, commanded in 1793 and 1794 in Poland with much success, took part in 1796 in the Persian campaign, but fell into disgrace under Paul, who did not employ him. Under Alexander, on the contrary, he was to figure again in the front rank, in the wars against Napoleon.

greatness of that incomparable sovereign. On 6 March, Bennigsen came to see my husband in the morning to speak to him (so he said) of a very important matter, but he found him so ill, in bed in fact, that he did not think him fit to listen, and expressed his regret in a sharp, almost impatient manner. It is probable that, but for this obstacle, M. Bennigsen would have revealed the plot to my husband, who would have treated his confidence as a man of honour and a faithful subject. The step would have had incalculable results.

On the evening of 11 March, he came back to our house, and told us that he was going away the same night, that his business was completed and that he was in a hurry to leave the town. Nicholas Zoubov[1] was also supposed to have left on some errand, but we suspected nothing. My husband, although convalescent, was still downstairs in his room, and Mme. de Tarente was sleeping in a room next to mine when, early the next morning, I heard a man's footsteps, opened my curtains, and saw my husband come in. I asked him what he wanted.

'I must speak to Mme. de Tarente at once,' he said.

I looked at my watch, and seeing that it was only six o'clock I felt uneasy, for I thought something dreadful had happened,—some decree of banishment, perhaps,—affecting Mme. de Tarente, especially when I heard her utter a cry of fright. Then my husband came back to tell me that the Emperor had died the night before of an apoplectic fit, at eleven o'clock in the evening.

I confess that this apoplectic fit seemed rather incomprehensible to me, and incompatible with the Emperor's complexion, but I had no suspicion of the truth. I got up hastily, and Mme. de Tarente dressed to go and take the oath at Court. My husband, although weak, went too.

While Mme. de Tarente was dressing to go to Court, my sister-in-law, Mme. de Neledinski and Mme. de Kalytchev, one of my cousins, arrived, and we were hazarding all sorts

[1] Brother of Prince Plato Zoubov (1763–1805), married to a daughter of Souvorov.

of conjectures on the subject of the Emperor's supposed apoplexy when the Comte de Crussol, Mme. de Tarente's nephew and the Emperor Paul's aide-de-camp, came into the room. His pallor and the sadness of his expression struck us somewhat, but the young man had always been kindly treated by the Emperor, and it seemed reasonable that he should regret him.

His aunt asked him a few particulars about the death, and he grew confused and his eyes filled with tears. Mme. de Tarente said to him: 'Speak out, my boy! There are no indiscreet persons here.' And then, in a horrified voice, he told us: 'The Emperor was assassinated last night.'

His words appalled us, we all burst out sobbing, so that our little company formed a picture of heartrending grief. My husband returned soon after, disgusted and dismayed with what he had heard.

On the morning of 11 March, Koutaïssov was waiting for the Emperor in the courtyard of the Palace, ready to accompany him on his ride, when a peasant, or at any rate a man dressed as such, went up to him and implored him to take a paper that he held out to him, which contained, he said, matters of the utmost consequence, which must be brought to the Emperor's knowledge that day. Koutaïssov was holding the bridle of his Majesty's horse with his right hand, so he took the paper with his left. After the ride he changed his coat, to go to the Emperor, and merely emptied his right-hand pocket, as was his custom, forgetting the peasant's paper, which he only remembered the next day, when it was too late. Paul was then no more, but the paper would have revealed the whole plot to him.

On the night of 11 March, one or two of the Preobrajenski battalions were brought into the courtyard, and drawn up round the castle with M. de Talyzine[1] at their head, the soldiers being informed that they were there to

[1] Peter Alexandrovitch Talyzine was General-in-Chief of the Preobrajenski Regiment, to which command he had been appointed on the recommendation of Count N. P. Panine, the original instigator of the plot.

protect the Emperor, whose life was in danger. Pahlen remained with them. Bennigsen, the two Zoubovs, Kazarinov,[1] Skariatine, three officers of the Guards, Ouvarov, and Count Volkonski[2] went up to the apartments of the Emperor, who was asleep. One of the hussars of the unfortunate Emperor tried to stop them, but Ouvarov and Volkonski struck him down.[3]

Ouvarov gave him a sabre cut on the head and compelled him to loose the door, but he managed to call out :

' Escape, Sire ! '

The assassins entered. The Emperor, awakened by the hussar's cry, had jumped out of bed and hidden behind a screen. They had a moment's fright, thinking he had eluded them, but they soon found him, and Bennigsen, the first to speak, announced to him that they had come to read him his Deed of Abdication. The Emperor saw Prince Zoubov, and said to him :

' And are you here too, Prince ? '

Nicholas Zoubov, who was drunk, said boldly :

' Why make so much ado ? Let us get straight to the point.'

And he rushed at the Emperor, who tried to get away by

[1] Doubtless meant for *Tatarinov*, an artillery colonel, who had been dismissed from the service. Skariatine, an officer in the Izmaïlovski regiment, is often quoted as having provided the scarf with which the Emperor was strangled—either his own, or that of the Emperor himself, which he usually hung over his bed at night.

[2] Peter Mikhailovitch (1776–1852), aide-de-camp to the Grand Duke Alexander, and his intimate friend. Major-General in 1801, he was one of those who were not punished for their share in the assassination, but as head of the staff in the campaigns of 1812–1814, and in various other capacities, accompanied the Emperor Alexander wherever he went, and was present at his deathbed. Minister of the Imperial Household and Appanages under Nicholas I, he died in 1852, heaped with honours and wealth.

[3] According to other accounts, this hussar (a lackey wearing hussar's uniform, but not carrying arms), who was struck down for no reason by one of the conspirators who was drunk, and rewarded later by the gift of a house at St. Petersburg, worth 50,000 francs, is said to have opened the door to the conspirators, by order of the adjutant, Argamakov, their accomplice. His name was Kornilov.

the door leading into the Empress's room, but unfortunately found it fastened.[1]

Nicholas Zoubov gave him a push, and he fell, striking his temple against a corner of the table, and fainted. The conspirators seized him, and Skariatine took off his scarf and strangled him. Then they laid him back on the bed, and Bennigsen with several others remained to keep guard over him while they went to tell Pahlen that all was over.

Pahlen then sent word to the Grand Duke Alexander that he had been proclaimed Emperor, and must show himself to the Guards, and the soldiers were ordered to shout 'Hurrah!' to their new sovereign. They all asked where his father was. The order was repeated, and this time they obeyed.

The Empress Marie awoke, heard the horrible news, and ran to the Emperor's room, but Bennigsen would not allow her to enter.

'How dare you stop me?' she said. 'Have you forgotten that I have been crowned, and that it is I who am now Empress?'

'Your son, Madame, has been proclaimed Emperor, and I am acting under his orders. Pass into the next room, and I will let you know at the right time.'

The Empress was locked into the room, with Mme. de Lieven, by Bennigsen, and kept there for more than an hour. In the meantime the unfortunate Prince's face was besmeared all over with paint, to hide the injuries that had been inflicted on him.

The Grand Duke Alexander had been roused between twelve and one o'clock in the night. The Grand Duchess Elizabeth, who had only been in bed half an hour, rose soon after him and, flinging on a dressing-gown, went to the window and raised the blind. The room was on the

[1] It was the Emperor's habit to barricade the door between his room and that of the Empress, to prevent her coming in at an inopportune moment. (Author's note.) He could have escaped through another door and a secret staircase leading to the apartments of the favourite, Princess Gagarine, but the conspirators had anticipated this issue and closed it up.

ground floor, and looked out on a sort of terrace, separated from the garden by the canal, which surrounded the Mikaïlovski Palace on all sides. On this snow-covered terrace the Grand Duchess saw, by the dim light of the moon, a line of soldiers drawn up all round the palace. Soon after she heard, several times over, shouts of 'Hurrah!' which filled her with a horror that she could not explain.

She had no very clear idea of what might be going on, but fell on her knees and prayed to God that whatever was happening might be for the good of Russia.

The Grand Duke came back, and, with gestures of the utmost despair, told his wife of the Emperor's cruel end, without, however, being able to give her any details.

'I do not know what I am or what I am doing,' he added. 'I cannot collect my thoughts; I must leave this place. Go to my mother, and persuade her to come to the Winter Palace as soon as possible.'

When the Emperor Alexander left the room, the Empress Elizabeth, seized with unspeakable terror, fell on her knees again in front of a chair. I believe she remained thus for a long time, without having any clear consciousness of things, and she has told me since that it was one of the most terrible hours in her life.

The Empress was roused from her prostration by a maid, who, probably alarmed at the state she was in, asked her whether she did not require anything. She hastily slipped on a dress, and, followed by this woman, went up to the apartments of the Empress, her mother-in-law, but at the door of her own apartments she found a picket of Guards, with an officer, who told her that she must not pass. After a good deal of parleying, however, he relented and she went on through, but when she reached the Empress Marie's apartments, she found her absent and was told she had just gone downstairs. So the Empress Elizabeth went down by another staircase, and found the Empress Marie in the ante-room of the new Emperor's apartments, surrounded by M. de Bennigsen and several other officers.

She was in a deplorable state of agitation and asked to see the *Emperor*, to which they replied :

'The Emperor Alexander is at the Winter Palace, and wishes you to go there too.'

'I know no Emperor Alexander,' she cried, with appalling shrieks; 'I want to see my Emperor.'

She took up her position in front of a door that opened on a staircase, and declared that she would not leave the spot unless they promised to let her see the Emperor Paul. She seemed to fancy that he was still alive. The Empress Elizabeth, the Grand Duchess Anne, Mme. de Lieven, M. de Bennigsen, and all who came near her begged her to come away, or at any rate to come inside the apartment, as the ante-room was filling up with persons of all sorts, before whom it was very undesirable to have scenes, but they were only able to get her away from the fatal door for a few moments.[1]

Every moment real or supposed messengers kept arriving from the Emperor Alexander, begging his mother to come to the Winter Palace, but she replied that she would not leave the Mikaïlovski Palace until she had seen the Emperor Paul.

The disorder that night was such that, just as the Empress Elizabeth had put her arm round her mother-in-law to support her, she felt someone squeeze her arm and kiss it vigorously, saying in Russian :

'You are our mother, our Sovereign!'

She turned round, and saw a grey-haired officer whom she did not know.

Towards the morning, the Empress Marie asked to see her children, and soon afterwards was taken to them. Still accompanied and supported by the Empress Elizabeth, she went back to her own apartments, and asked to speak to Mme. de Pahlen. During their conversation she shut up the Empress Elizabeth in a little closet adjoining the room in which the crime had just been committed, and what

[1] All testimony points to Marie Feodorovna having been mainly anxious to assert her own right to the throne.

she went through during those awful moments made an ineffaceable impression on her mind. She has told me that the atmosphere of the palace seemed laden with crime, and that she waited with unspeakable impatience for the moment when she should be able to leave it; but this was only after she had led the Empress, her mother-in-law, to look at the body of her husband, and had supported her through the terrible ordeal.

The Empress Marie made all her children accompany her, and uttered frightful shrieks when she went into the room where the late Emperor still lay on his camp bedstead, dressed in his ordinary uniform, and with his hat on his head. At last, between five and six o'clock in the morning, the Empress Elizabeth, accompanied by her principal maid, Mme. Hesler, left this abode of horrors for the Winter Palace. When she arrived in her apartments, she found the Emperor lying on his divan, pale, dejected, and prostrate with grief.

Count de Pahlen was in the room, but instead of withdrawing, as respect would have dictated, he only moved away into the embrasure of a window. The Emperor said to the Empress Elizabeth:

'I cannot fulfil the duties imposed upon me. How should I have strength to reign with the remembrance that my father was assassinated constantly before my eyes? I cannot. I resign my power to whosoever will take it. Let those who have committed the crime be responsible for what may happen.'

The Empress, although deeply touched by the condition in which she found her husband, pointed out to him the frightful consequences that would ensue from such a resolution, and the disorder into which he would fling the whole Empire. She implored him to take courage and devote himself to the happiness of his people, regarding the exercise of power, for the moment, as an expiation. She would have liked to say much more to him, but the intrusive presence of Count de Pahlen restrained her.

5

In the meantime, the public were assembling in the state apartments, and the oath was being administered, without the Emperor or Empress being present. The Empress Marie arrived at the Winter Palace some hours after her children, and her interview with the Emperor was heartrending. As for him, he was much more a picture of despair than his mother herself, and it was impossible to look at him without feeling one's heart bleed, and yet she shouted to him, as soon as she caught sight of him: 'Alexander, are you guilty?'

Eight or ten days after the death of the Emperor Paul, news arrived of the death of the Archduchess Alexandrine, at the birth of her first child. It seemed as if so many misfortunes would have overwhelmed the Dowager Empress, or at any rate would have made her forget for the moment everything but her personal sorrow. But, instead of that, the Emperor Paul was not buried before she had already considered all the arrangements, unavoidable in such cases, but of which, out of consideration for her, her son had omitted to speak. She declared that she would not have a separate household allotted to her, and made the Emperor promise that the officials of his Court should also be in attendance upon her.

A few days after his accession, the Emperor had appointed a maid of honour, Princess Barbara Volkonski. As was customary, she was presented with the monogram of his wife, and, at the same time, all the maids of honour who had been attached to the person of the Grand Duchess Elizabeth likewise received the Empress Elizabeth's monogram. On the same day that the Dowager Empress heard of this very simple and usual incident, so much a matter of course under the circumstances, she extorted from the Emperor a promise that, for the future, the ladies in waiting and the maids of honour should be decorated with the portraits of the two Empresses, and with the double mono-

gram. The thing was unprecedented, but, at this time, the Dowager Empress could obtain anything from her son, and she determined not to let slip the opportunity.

After the first six weeks of mourning were over, she reappeared in public. She made out to the Emperor that this was a very meritorious act on her part and incessantly repeated to him how painful it was to her to see, even from a distance, people whom she knew to have conspired against her husband, but that she sacrificed her feelings to her maternal affection. She might, however, have made this sacrifice without appearing in public with quite such unfitting haste, a haste that no one required of her, and that served no useful purpose whatever.

She had herself painted in deep mourning, and distributed as many of these portraits as she could find persons to give them to.

In May she went to Pavlovsk, which was her own property, as well as Gatchina, which the Emperor Paul had willed to her, and in the first-mentioned place she led a life much more dissipated and brilliant than had ever been the case in the time of Paul I. She received a great deal of company, and went for long rides on horseback with them. There were dinners, luncheons, and suppers in various parts of the garden, and she planted, built, and mixed herself up in affairs of state as far as lay in her power. In a word, she seemed so content and so busy enjoying life that, but for her mourning, it would have been difficult to believe her the widow of a ruler who had recently been brutally done to death.[1]

It was necessary to give all these details concerning her, in order to explain the footing on which the Dowager Empress established herself immediately after the death of her husband. But let us now go back to the body of the unfortunate Emperor.

It lay in state in the Mikaïlovski Palace, painted and

[1] This testimony is formally contradicted by Sabloukov, who commanded the Empress's Guards at Pavlovsk, and who declares her, on the contrary, to have abandoned herself entirely to her grief.

varnished like a doll, and wearing a hat to hide the injuries to the head. After a fortnight, the funeral took place at the fortress and Paul I was laid with his ancestors.[1] The whole Court, with the exception of the two Empresses, followed the funeral procession on foot. (The Empress Elizabeth was ill.) The royal insignia were borne on two cushions, and Count Roumiantsov, afterwards Chancellor, and then Grand Master of the Court, was deputed to carry the sceptre. He dropped it, and for a distance of some twenty paces did not notice that he had done so, which accident gave rise to many superstitious remarks.

[1] On 23 March, the day after Good Friday.

PART III

THE REIGN OF ALEXANDER I

CHAPTER X

1801–1802

1. The new reign—Excessive liberty—'Now we can do what we like'—General enthusiasm—Change of policy and of officials. 2. The *Triumvirate*—The triumph of Count Tolstoy—In disgrace—Count Golovine resigns—Plans for a journey to France—Countess Tolstoy's confession. 3. The departure—Farewell audiences—Apologies and explanation—Sad farewells. 4. The journey—Riga—Königsberg—Sad arrival in Berlin—Illness of the authoress's elder daughter—Miraculous cure. 5. Berlin society—Mme. de Krudener—Princess Ferdinand of Prussia—Princess Louise Radziwill. 6. In Saxony and Thuringia—Leipzig—Frankfurt—The fair. 7. In France—Praise of the French inns and posting stations—The revolutionary spirit—Paris—The Faubourg Saint Germain—The Rue de Babylone—The Hôtel Cassini—The Princess of Taranto.

I

ENTHUSIASM for the Emperor Alexander was at its height. All his exiled friends returned to St. Petersburg, either of their own accord or recalled by him. There was an influx into the capital, which, towards the end of the reign of Paul I, had been almost deserted on account of the numbers of people who were banished, or who feared to be, so that many were self-exiled. Anarchy succeeded the repression of the late reign. Costumes of all kinds were to be seen again, carriages tore about the streets, and I myself saw an officer of hussars galloping along the footpath

of the embankment, shouting 'Now we can do what we like!'

This sudden change was alarming, but it was rooted only in the extreme confidence the people felt in the new Emperor's kindness. From every corner of the Empire crowds flocked to see the young sovereign, the favourite grandson of Catherine II, whose memory was still enshrined in all hearts. That title alone would have been enough to win him the love of all his subjects. But everything about him contributed to exalt him in their estimation, and to suggest the brightest hopes. His virtues were applauded, and what ought to have been disapproved of was excused. Never was the dawn of any reign more auspicious.

The danger of war against England, that had been on the verge of breaking out at the end of the reign of Paul I, was ended the moment that Alexander ascended the throne, but the news of the change of sovereign did not travel quickly enough to prevent a great naval battle at the entrance to the Sound between the English fleet under Nelson and the Danish fleet—the Danes, like faithful allies as they were, defending the entrance to the Baltic with great courage. Admiral Tchitchagov was sent to Copenhagen to negotiate an easily effected understanding.

M. de Beklechov was made Procurator-General in place of M. Obolianinov, who was dismissed, Prince Alexander Kourakine remained Vice-Chancellor, Pahlen was banished to his own estates,[1] and likewise Skariatine. Prince Zoubov, who had been criminal through cowardice, tried to play a part, but succeeding in nothing, retired to his own estates. His two brothers remained, as well as the other actors in the tragedy of 11 March. Koutaïssov left the Court and went to Moscow, where he died, forgotten, in January 1824, for his cowardly conduct in the latter part of the reign of Paul I had earned him universal contempt. The soldiery were retained on the same footing, the uniforms only being changed: the curls and queues were cut off.

[1] Not before 17 June, 1801.

In the spring of this year the Hereditary Princess of Baden, the mother of the Empress Elizabeth, arrived at St. Petersburg with two of her daughters, the Princess Amelia and the Princess Maria. The latter was afterwards married to the Duke of Brunswick and died a few years later. The Court stayed at Kamiennyï-Ostrov, and I at my country-house, opposite the palace. Everyone went to pay their respects to the Princess of Baden, but I did not have this honour. I thought that my least suspicious action might appear so, and that it was better to say nothing and remain entirely in the background.

All association between the Empress and myself was now broken off, and I was in complete ignorance of all that concerned her. What was said in society I did not believe, so I made up my mind to wait until happier days brought me the opportunity of learning what interested me more than my own happiness. I shall speak therefore, for the future, only of events which I witnessed myself, until the time when, reconciled to the Empress, I enjoyed once more, in her friendship, the memory of many happy moments, and found oblivion for many sorrows. Then I will relate all she told me of what had happened during the long interval.

2

The house of Countess Stroganov had become the favourite resort of Count Tolstoy, who was at that time an intimate friend of Prince Czartoryski and M. Novossiltsov.[1] They were called the Triumvirate.[2] The Emperor specially

[1] Nicholas Nikolaïevitch, 1761–1838, a great friend of the Grand Dukes Alexander and Constantine, and a very clever man; he became, in 1803, President of the Academy of Science, but was frequently employed by Alexander on diplomatic missions. Ignored after the reconciliation of the Tsar with Napoleon, he lived abroad, re-entered the service of his country as a Senator in 1813, then became Governor-General of Warsaw. Under Nicholas he was, in 1834, President of the Council of Empire and of the Council of Ministers.

[2] Countess Golovine is mistaken in this. Tolstoy did not form part of the Triumvirate. *See* note to p. 210.

favoured the Stroganov household, and went there often. Count Tolstoy said the most abusive and venomous things about me: I had taken his wife from him; I had tried to sully the reputation of the Empress Elizabeth, and so on. Everyone listened to him, some because they were credulous, others because they were base.

I confess that my patience was tried to the utmost, but the Princess braced my courage, and softened the bitterness of my troubles by sharing them with me.

The culmination of Count Tolstoy's triumph was when he had induced the Empress Elizabeth to write to his wife, and persuade her to return to him. The Countess yielded to the wishes of her Majesty, and wrote to inform me of her intended return, telling me of the invitation that had brought it about, and what she had replied to it. She arrived a few days afterwards, shortly before the departure of the Princess of Taranto, who left St. Petersburg in the month of August. I wrote to Countess Tolstoy that she had better not come to see me until after she had been to Court, so that if anything concerning me should escape her, it might not be supposed that I had placed the words in her mouth. She did what I wished.

From the front steps of my house, I could see the palace and the Empress's windows; I knew that Mme. de Tolstoy was there, and I gazed on the place with feelings so mingled that I should have difficulty in putting them into words.

At last the Countess came to see me, but the pleasure of our meeting was marred for me by what she told me of the Empress. When she asked permission to leave her, to come to see me, her Majesty had seemed astonished that she should think of doing so.

'Why!' she said, 'are you thinking of going to see Mme. de Golovine?'

'Yes, Madame, she is still my friend; I shall never forget what she has done and suffered for me, and I confess that I am surprised at your Majesty's change of feeling with regard to her.'

'What!' said the Empress, 'have you forgotten the Rastoptchine affair?'

This reference was an enigma, which was only explained to me many years later. It is very easy to be ignorant of what one has never dreamt of doing.

Countess Tolstoy tried every means in her power to induce her husband to come back to us, but did not succeed. He replied to her that the Empress Elizabeth had expressly forbidden it.

One evening, between eight and nine o'clock, I was alone in my drawing-room, the door of which was open to the steps.[1] I could see the still and tranquil river, through the columns of the veranda, and all was quiet round me, but I was unhappy, and to me there was something sinister about the tranquillity that was in such bitter contrast to my feelings. My husband and Mme. de Tarente had gone out for a walk, my children were being put to bed, and I was quite alone. Suddenly I heard horses, went out on the steps and saw the Empress riding past, followed by a few equerries. She put her horse to the gallop when she saw me, and looked another way. My heart seemed to stand still, but I leaned against a pillar and followed her with my eyes as long as it was possible for me to see her. 'They spurn you, accuse you, and perhaps hate you,' I said to myself, 'and yet you love as if you were beloved.' I looked up to Heaven, imploring God to have pity on me, and a flood of tears came, which relieved somewhat the heaviness at my heart.

The Court went to Moscow for the Coronation and Mme. de Tolstoy went with them. In accordance with her mother's wish, Mme. de Tarente asked and obtained permission to go to visit her in Paris. My husband, at the same time, asked for his resignation to be definitely and finally accepted.

On parting from Mme. de Tarente, I realised more fully the extent of my troubles. She left me on 5 September, making my husband give her a solemn promise that he would

[1] The Golovine *datcha*, on the great Nevka, is almost unchanged at the present day.

bring me to France, which he readily did. His own health required special treatment, and waters were recommended, and I, too, was feeling ill from my constant private sorrows; while the nervous attacks my poor mother suffered from, which caused me well-founded uneasiness, contributed further thoroughly to upset my health. The journey was a necessity to me, but on the other hand the idea of leaving my mother was too painful to entertain. My husband, however, for whom she felt a real maternal affection, and who had well deserved it through his care and devotion, vanquished all obstacles by persuading her to accompany us. So it was decided that, at the beginning of the summer of 1802, we should leave Russia. This assurance raised my courage, for I felt the need of leaving the scene of my sorrows.

I went back into town, where the absence of Mme. de Tarente made me feel a great void. The Court returned from Moscow, together with Mme. de Tolstoy, who dropped upon me one evening as though from the clouds, and I was as surprised as I was happy to see her again. Her husband's conduct had put an end to our habitual intercourse, and she no longer came every day to see me. He wished her to see people and to give balls, to which he proposed once to invite me, but Mme. de Tolstoy knew me well enough to reply that I should not accept his invitations.

She gave herself up to society for a time, but it was a state of things that could not continue, for her fine mind needed occupation more worthy of her. One evening she came to my house saying that she was anxious to speak to me freely and wanted to be sure of not being interrupted, so I promised to close my door to everyone on the afternoon of the following day; when she arrived we went into my boudoir, and there she made a full confession to me of the state of her heart and her past sorrows and errors. She concluded by saying:

'You knew that your tender solicitude for me and your sincere friendship were unable to free me from the fetters in which passion seemed to have bound me. But God had pity on me. Just when I was reaching the culminating

point of my blindness and folly, he who was the object of it destroyed my delusion himself. The news of his marriage opened my eyes to the abyss into which I was on the point of hurling myself. I was in despair, but I had recourse to a pitiful Father, who purified my heart and filled my soul with love and gratitude towards Himself. I ask your pardon for having deceived you: I told you that I was cured when I left you, but my only thought was to get away from you and follow him whom I had no right to love. I hope my confession may win me back your confidence.'

I need not say that I was deeply moved, and that our reconciliation was complete.

My husband, thinking he would be away for seven years, inquired whether the Emperor would purchase his country-seat, opposite to Kamiennyï-Ostrov, to which request his Majesty acceded most graciously, and the house was sold, to my great regret. If I had had any voice in the matter we should have kept it, but my husband was so unhappy, and so disgusted with all that had happened, that, at the moment, he would have sold everything he had.

I heard from Mme. de Tarente regularly. She wrote to me every day, when she was changing horses, and never ceased to think about me, while, since Mme. de Tolstoy's confession, I was also more at my ease with her, and she had begun to show me all her old affection again. The thought of joining Mme. de Tarente once more was also inexpressibly sweet to me.

3

The month of May arrived, and at the beginning of June we were to start. A fortnight before our departure there was a ball at M. de Niza, the Portuguese Minister's, at which the Court was to be present. My husband asked Mme. de Tolstoy, who was going to this entertainment, to ask the Emperor on his behalf, should a favourable opportunity present itself, for permission to go and say good-bye to him

privately, that he might at the same time thank him for all his kindness.

Mme. de Tolstoy eagerly undertook this commission, and, as she was dancing a polonaise with the Emperor, said to him :

' Sire, I have a favour to ask you ; Count Golovine is very anxious to have a private interview with you, to thank you, and take leave of you. Will your Majesty permit it ? '

' With pleasure,' said the Emperor, ' let him come to-morrow, to my study, at twelve o'clock.'

Mme. de Tolstoy joyfully reported this answer to us, and my husband went to the Emperor at the appointed time. They had an explanation as interesting as it was affecting. My husband begged the Emperor's pardon for having left his Court so hastily, in a fit of temper, and asked him to judge him, not by his words, but by his deeds, and in particular not to misunderstand the motives which had on various occasions influenced his actions. The Emperor, too, admitted that he had been in the wrong, and they parted on the best of terms.

As he came out of the Emperor's room, my husband met Count Tolstoy, who knew nothing of what had happened, and was exceedingly astonished to see him. He asked the Emperor how it had chanced that Count Golovine had been with him. The Emperor, fearing to get Mme. de Tolstoy into trouble, replied that he had met my husband out walking, and had asked him to come. On the evening of the same day, his Majesty told Countess Tolstoy what he had done, but she replied that his Majesty's caution on her behalf had been unnecessary, as she did not hide from her husband the feelings that she retained for her friends, and that if Count Tolstoy were ungrateful and unjust, that was no reason why she should be the same. She ended by saying that she should make it her business to tell her husband exactly what had happened.

I also begged Mme. de Tolstoy to announce my farewell presentation at Court. The Empress Elizabeth wished this to take place in the usual way, but the Countess pointed out

to her that it was only fair for me to be admitted privately. Her Majesty consented, but on condition that Mme. de Tolstoy should come with me.

I arrived in her Majesty's boudoir, at seven o'clock in the evening, in a state of profound agitation. She had with her her sister, the Princess Amelia, whom the Princess of Baden had left behind in St. Petersburg, and the conversation was strained and on trivial subjects. The interview, which was very painful to me, lasted almost half an hour, then I said to Mme. de Tolstoy that I had trespassed sufficiently on the Empress's kindness, and that it was time for me to withdraw. Her Majesty said a few words to me with reference to my travelling plans, and I then took leave of her, more unhappy than when I had arrived. If she could have read my thoughts, she would have regretted her injustice.

But let us leave these painful times, which I ought only to remember with gratitude. They taught me to recognise the strength of my attachment to the Empress, and showed me how much a faithful heart can endure; but it would have been difficult for me to feel other than I did, since I knew the Empress too well to cease to love her, and I would rather have suffered twice as much than have lost the affection I bore her. The real happiness of my heart seemed dependent on it. She was under a misapprehension, and circumstances all combined to make me appear guilty of the most appalling wrong to her, enemies surrounded me on all sides, and my self-imposed and at the same time necessary silence left a fair field to my adversaries.

I had to take leave of the Dowager Empress at Pavlovsk, and dined with her, as is customary. During the reception, the Empress Elizabeth came up to me and said in icy tones:

'You seem to be feeling better to-day, Madame.'

Her manner cut me to the quick.

'I certainly am much better,' I replied, 'since I know definitely that I am going away from here.'

Such was our farewell.

The day before I left, Countess Stroganov came to say good-bye to me. I was taking her to the door afterwards,

and we stopped to look out at a window. The street was blocked by carriages of all sorts, for there was a theatre opposite my house ,and the people were just going in, and, at the same time, a funeral was trying to make its way through carriages four deep, which were in a great hurry and all trying to pass one another. It was a striking picture of life : the impatience to enjoy, and the inevitable end.

The mingled impressions that these various sights and sounds produced on us induced the Countess to speak more freely, and she uttered many expressions of regret, and made many allusions to the past.

' I am going to speak to you,' I said, ' with the same frankness as if I were dying. Separation is very much like death, for can we know whether we shall ever meet again ? You have allowed my enemies to say very unjust things about me in your house ; you cannot deny it.'

' Why ! I have never said anything about you ! '

' You have allowed these wicked things to be said without ever taking my part, although you knew well that they were not true. Yet I have not borne malice against you, and I have not retaliated, although I could have done so. The Emperor's visits to you have given occasion to many remarks, but I have always defended you and silenced those who spoke to me about it.'

4

We left St. Petersburg on 8 June 1802, after Mass. All our servants were in tears, but I did my utmost to prevent my mother seeing it. Mme. de Tolstoy accompanied us as far as Ropcha, a country-seat belonging to the Emperor, where we spent a day and a night. The next day, early, we started, after bidding Mme. de Tolstoy a very tender farewell. I drove in my mother's berlin with my youngest daughter, aged six, and the sister of her governess, whom my mother was very fond of, and whose name was Henrietta. In the other carriage were my husband and my elder girl, the

governess, and the surgeon. Afterwards came our two maids and two valets.

On Esthonia and its savage inhabitants, who speak an unintelligible language and have faces that do not seem human, I will not dwell. At Narva we spent thirty-six hours, to give my mother some rest. I had eyes only for her, and I trembled lest one of her nervous attacks should overtake her on the journey. We sometimes travelled all through the night, only stopping in the large towns, and I remember one evening, as we were passing through a little hamlet in Livonia, I heard a bell tolling. I caught sight first of a Gothic church, with a tower standing out against the heavy sky, in which the wind was piling up the clouds. All Nature seemed to be announcing death. A little farther on, I saw the mournful procession advancing slowly towards the cemetery, I tried to hide the sight from my mother, and was only easy when we were once more on the high-road.

We stayed two days at Riga. The weather was superb, and I went about the town with Mme. Bolvilliers, the daughter of Mme. Oubril, an old acquaintance whom my mother was very pleased to meet again, and who kept her company whilst I was out. I heard a Mass for my mother, and afterwards made a sketch of a delightful view from the bridge, then, perceiving a Catholic church on our way back to the inn, I asked my companion if people could go in.

'Always,' she said, 'it is never closed.'

I was very much struck by the simplicity and poverty of this church. A monk was on his knees, plunged in pious meditations, and involuntarily I, too, kneeled down gazing on the Grand Crucifix which was on the altar. The silence and the quiet around me filled my heart with heavenly feelings, and it was with regret that I rose to leave. The monk rose too, and I asked him if any little pictures were to be had. He brought me some, and I offered him money, which he refused, so I slipped it into the poor-box, and went home, feeling an inner peace that had been a stranger to me for a long time.

I shall never forget that church.

At Königsberg we stayed at the Golden Eagle Hotel. I

saw some servants in mourning, and learnt that M. de Niza, the Portuguese Minister, who had left St. Petersburg a few days before us, had fallen ill with the smallpox in this inn, and had just died. They were returning from his funeral. We slept next door to the room that he had occupied, but fortunately none of us were afraid of ghosts, or of the smallpox.

I slept with my younger daughter in a little room next to my mother's. The walls of this tiny little place were covered, the one with a portrait of Frederick II, and another with one of his father, both full length and life-size, and my little girl could not go to sleep for them, and said to me :

' Mamma, I cannot close my eyes : these two kings have such big eyes and stare at me all the time.'

A rattle, which at Königsberg announces the passing of the hours, consummated my wakefulness, but my mother was asleep, and that was enough for me. The next day we left after dinner, and, on a glorious night, drove through the beautiful forests of Prussia. The moon shone brilliantly, and, under the circumstances, I was not as impatient as usual at the slowness of the Prussian postilions and the heaviness of their horses. With my head against the window, I breathed in the pure air and gazed at the long shadows of the trees and the soft light of the moon, reflected against the thick trunks of the oaks. The postilions were walking, on account of the sandy road, and blew their horns at intervals, the notes echoing and re-echoing in the distance.

At two days' journey from Berlin, my eldest girl fell ill. On arriving in Berlin, we put her to bed, and a burning fever manifested itself, with agonising pain, all seeming to indicate a serious illness. We called in Dr. Huffeland,[1] who appeared uneasy, but his care and ours relieved her and she appeared to recover. However, it was impossible to remain in the inn, where the continual noise of the *table d'hôte*, and of the people coming and going, together with serenades, which continued far into the night, left us no rest. We looked for apartments, and found some in a private house, in the Linden Walk. My daughter was carried there in a

[1] A celebrated practitioner at the time, born 1762, died in 1836.

sedan chair, and, as she was feeling better, the journey entertained her greatly. But, after two or three days, she fell more seriously ill than before, and a high fever, with nervous symptoms, declared itself.

My alarm was extreme, and my husband was in despair, but I tried my best to hide from my mother the danger which I saw so plainly. As I understood taking her pulse, I was able to give Huffeland an exact account of all changes. Her pulse became intermittent, and restless delirium recurred every evening. I sat up with my daughter, but my mind suffered more even than my poor body, though what specially fatigued me was my child's breathing. I could not help breathing just as she did, with her. I implored the doctor to tell me exactly what the danger was, and he admitted that she was in a most critical state : the only chance he saw for her was a bath, and, if she could stand it without convulsions, there would be some hope, but if there were the slightest nervous twitch, all would be over.

I hid my terrible fears from my mother and my husband, and arranged with Huffeland to prepare the bath without delay.

' I am going to see the Queen now,' he said, ' when I have been there I will come straight back to you.'

I persuaded my mother to go for a short walk with my little girl and Henrietta, and I sat down at a writing-table facing the invalid's bed, while the governess and the two maids prepared the bath. I rested my chin in my hands, without having the courage to look at my daughter, and my eyes fell on a copy of the ' Journée du Chrétien,' which the Abbé Chanclos, my children's history master, had given me as a souvenir on my departure, and I opened the book and saw the following passage :

' My God, I will what Thou wilt, because Thou willest it, as Thou willest it, and as much as Thou willest.'

These words were to me a ray of divine light and an order to resign myself. I repeated the prayer several times, with ever increasing fervour, and succeeded at last in proferring my inner sacrifice with such ardour that I fell on my knees, and a cold perspiration covered my forehead.

When the bath was brought, I rose and rushed into the other room, for I was suffocating with tears. I closed the door, trembling, and applying my eye to the keyhole, I saw them put my little girl in the bath, her wild hair and open mouth making her look even more appallingly thin than she was. For the time, all my faculties were suspended.

But almost as soon as she was in the water, I heard her say: 'Oh! dear, how comfortable I am! Can I stay in this water?'

I was beside myself with joy at these words and ran to meet Huffeland, who was just arriving.

When he heard what I had to say, he was delighted.

'It is a miracle!' he said.

At last, after great anxiety and anxious nursing, my daughter was on the high-road to recovery, and joy took the place of my cruel anguish.

5

I went to take tea with Baroness de Krudener[1] the wife of our chargé d'affaires, a sweet and excellent woman, who had always taken an affectionate interest in me. On my second visit to her I met a good many persons, Baroness Le Fort, an elderly, kind woman, the mother of Mme. de Sertoris, Lady of the Bedchamber to Princess Louise Radziwill,[2] and the Countess de Neal, with her eldest daughter, the one being in the household of Princess Ferdinand, the other in that of Princess Louise. They made every possible advance to me, and asked to come and see me. Mme. de

[1] Barbara Julia de Vietinghoff, born at Riga in 1764, died in the Crimea, 25 December, 1824, married to Baron Burchard Alexis Constantine de Krudener, successively Ambassador at Venice (1784), at Copenhagen (1786), at Madrid (1796), and eventually at Berlin (where he died in 1802), she was the authoress and heroine of *Valérie*, a novel universally read, and for various reasons one of the most celebrated women of the beginning of the nineteenth century.

[2] Daughter of Prince Ferdinand of Prussia, the youngest brother of King Frederick II, married in 1796 to Prince Anthony Radziwill, head of one of the branches of the illustrious Polish family of that name.

Krusemarck, friend of Princess Bariatinski, Countess Tolstoy's mother, came too, and talked a great deal about my friend's family, of her difficulty with her husband, and the letter that the Empress had written to her, to make her return to him. She tried to make me talk, and endeavoured to find out whether I really had contributed to the rupture in the Tolstoy household, and whether I was in total disgrace with the Empress. I did not satisfy her on any point, but merely listened to what she said, in such a manner as to show her that I did not scatter my confidences broadcast in every town that I passed through.

The Countess de Neal came and invited me to walk in the grounds of Bellevue, the country seat and castle at which the Princess Ferdinand, with her daughter and her Court, was residing. I accepted, and went to her house, and we strolled about a garden that was tolerably pretty, but in which I saw nothing noteworthy, with the exception of the flowers that the Princess cultivated herself. As I passed in front of the castle, I saw the Princess on her balcony, and she came down and spoke to me in the kindest and most charming manner, obliging me to go in. I then made the acquaintance of Princess Louise, a charming woman, of great grace and intelligence, and I also saw her brother, Prince Louis, for Princess Ferdinand took me into her son's room, where he was playing on the harpsichord with extraordinary ability. After some time, I took leave of their Highnesses. I will not speak of Prince Ferdinand himself, as I do not wish to enter into details of ridiculous and foolish things, and as regards his youngest son, he has a rather good-looking face, but is sullen and common.

Princess Louise herself called at my door next morning, to ask how my daughter was, and to invite me to spend the evening of the next day with her. I found her alone, embroidering at a frame, in a very small boudoir, and we had a long and pleasant chat. A conversation between persons who neither are friends nor have any private interest in each other ought to flow naturally and easily, and Princess Louise has a special gift for conducting such talks.

During our interview, I noticed that the Princess seemed uneasy at a certain noise that we heard now and again. I have heard since that her mother was always on the watch, for she was of a most exacting nature and jealous of attentions paid to her daughter, and Princess Louise was afraid she would come in and interrupt us.

Her children are delightful, in particular, a little girl named Lulu, whom she has since lost.

My daughter's convalescence was long, and we stayed nearly two months in Berlin. I often saw Princess Louise during this time, but I only went to her mother again to take my leave. I did not wish to appear at Court, as I was not inclined for dress, and the trouble and worry entailed by it.

6

As the season for taking the waters was over, we decided to go straight on to Paris, but stopped three days at Leipzig, while the fair was going on, and had pleasant lodgings there, where my mother was very comfortable. My daughter was visibly gaining strength. I took all the Leipzig walks, and went to the shops with my husband and my youngest girl, reserving for the next day, however, one visit that was of special interest to me. I rose very early and, taking my sketch-book, went with Henrietta and a hired footman to look for the house in which Mme. de Schönburg had died. The evening before she died, she asked to be carried out on a terrace covered with flowers, of which she had a number gathered for her mother.

I found the terrace and the flowers, not the same ones, of course, but perhaps growing on the same stalks, and I was so fascinated by them that I could not take my eyes from them. My heart was full, for though death can take away from us what we love, our affection only dies with us.

I tore myself away with difficulty from this terrace and

went to sketch a view from the bridge which crosses the moat round the town. The crenellated wall was admirably lighted up, and I was trying to draw it, leaning on the parapet, when a strange voice said :

' Do you know French, Madame ? '

I turned round, and saw a strange man, who repeated the question, to which I replied that I did.

' Let me warn you, Madame,' he went on, ' that the soldier and the sentinel whom you see over there are taking you for a French spy and will try to seize the plan they suppose you are making.'

I thanked this stranger, but assured him that I was not in the least afraid, and went quietly on with my work, merely taking the precaution of going nearer to the sentinel, to prove that I had nothing to hide, so that he was satisfied, from my unperturbed manner, that I was not doing anything suspicious, and I was not disturbed again.

We drove through Upper Saxony in magnificent weather. After having travelled all through one night, the postilions stopped at a pretty little house situated at the entrance to a large forest. We went in this house, which consisted of three or four large rooms and was the property of a peasant. The drawing-room was decorated with several portraits, so oddly posed that one could not fail to be struck by them. Each figure had only one eye : one gentleman was looking through a telescope, a lady held a parrot with its head hiding her one eye, another held a rose, the branch of which did the same, and another held up a lemon in front of her eye. Apparently they were a family of one-eyed people.

The chairs, upholstered in high warp tapestry, represented the marriage of young Tobias, and the outer wall of the house was covered with peaches and espalier grapes. I went on into the forest with my husband and little girl, and ordered the carriages to follow us when they were ready, thinking we would go a little way on foot. We had hardly walked a hundred yards when we came to a gigantic oak, the trunk of which was of extraordinary thickness, and

had a seat all round it, destined, no doubt, for the repose of weary travellers. Above this bench, the bark of the tree was covered with inscriptions in every European language.

Thuringia is a beautiful country, and well cultivated. After driving through Thuringia, we came to Frankfurt, where we arrived in the evening, and put up in a large pavilion surrounded by gardens. The fair had just begun, and we were told that we could not have any horses for three days, on account of the influx of people into the town just at this time. Old Count Nesselrode came to call upon us at once, told us plenty of news, placed his services at my disposal and offered to take me to the fair, to which we all went the next day.

The shops are at the bottom of a square block of houses several storeys high, and you gain admission to them through a sort of turnstile. They are very fine, and Parisian goods are to be had there in plenty ; I bought some books and portfolios of original drawings at Artaria's. I will not here enter into details about Darmstadt, nor speak of the beautiful situation of Heidelberg, nor mention several other towns that I saw better on my return journey, amongst others, Rastadt. On leaving this last town, I cast a look of keen interest up the avenue leading to Carlsruhe, the usual residence of the Dowager Princess of Baden. I avoided Carlsruhe out of discretion, pure and simple, being afraid that my presentation to her might give rise to comment, and I was likewise anxious that the Empress Elizabeth should not be able to think that I wished to justify myself in her mother's eyes.

It was likewise in the evening that we arrived at Strasburg, and as we drove into the courtyard of the Hostel of the Holy Ghost, where we were to stay, a woman came forward eagerly to open the door of my carriage. What was my amazement to recognise in her Mme. de Kouchelev, a very entertaining woman, of whom I was extremely fond. With one spring I was in her arms, for I was delighted to see her. It is always such a pleasure to meet one's compatriots abroad.

We spent four days together, and even our apartments were only separated by a closed door, which we opened, by mutual consent. She had her son with her, at that time a delightful young man, and he acted as my cicerone, showing me the town, the cathedral, the monument to the Marshal of Saxony, and a knight with his lady floating in coffins filled with spirits of wine. Unfortunately young Kouchelev has greatly changed since, and he accelerated his mother's death by the countless sorrows he caused her.

At the other end of our suite the Duchesse d'Esclignac, the natural daughter of Prince Xavier and the sister of the Chevalier de Saxe, who was killed by Prince Chtcherbatov in a duel, had hers. I heard her quarrelling with her maid like a veritable comedy marquise, and the other answering her like a soubrette.

'You are wrong, Miss.'

'Your Grace makes a mistake. . . . .' Etc., etc.

I left Mme. de Kouchelev, hoping to see her again shortly in Paris. We spent an hour in the ascent of the lovely Saverne mountain, which presents every variety of scenery nature can offer. The view from the summit is of great beauty.

7

As soon as I had crossed the French frontier, my one thought was to be with Mme. de Tarente. We travelled much more quickly than we had been doing, for the post service is excellent in France, and the postilions punctual and obliging. I found perfect inns, good dinners, good wine, active servants, and gay, good-natured people. It was only at Nancy and at Meaux that I saw anything of the revolutionary spirit. As I was walking about one of these two towns, while the horses were being changed, I met two or three young men, who called after me:

'Oh! oh! we do not wear trains now, because there are no more pages to carry them!'

'You are mistaken, gentlemen,' I replied, 'I am not a Frenchwoman, I am a Russian, and we have not shed the blood of our sovereigns.'

They said no more, and went off in a hurry.

We arrived at the gates of Paris at 2 o'clock in the morning, and while our passports were being examined, I heard delightful music, and saw country dances being danced on the lawn. I asked my mother's permission to get into my husband's carriage, and sent my elder daughter into hers. I was assailed by a crowd of conflicting thoughts, for my heart was beating with happiness at the thought of seeing Mme. de Tarente again, and my mind was in a turmoil on entering the great city.

As we passed St. Martin's gate, a crowd of memories thronged in upon me, and I recalled all that I had heard from my uncle, who had spent so many years in this immense city. The thought of the Revolution, the noise, the shouts, the bustle of the carriages, the bells of the horses, the street music, the dense crowd of people, who do not walk, but run and dash about, the cries of the street hawkers, and the general impression created by a thousand and one things, unimportant in themselves, produced the strangest effect upon me.

In Paris it is, in truth, that we see all the pomps and vanities of the world. We passed the Pont Royal and entered the Faubourg St. Germain, the most distinguished quarter, by reason of its being the congregating place of all the old nobility. We entered the Rue du Bac, without knowing where to go, but were directed by a woman to the Hôtel de Cassini, Rue de Babylone. We knocked at a great door, which was opened, and we saw a pretty courtyard decorated with a trelliswork of vines, and a number of lighted windows; a valet and two footmen came to meet us with torches, and my husband took my mother and my children into the house, but I remained in the courtyard, waiting for Mme. de Tarente, who was only a few yards away, at Mme. de Luxembourg's, and whom they had gone to fetch.

It was the 3rd of October, and the night was dark and warm. The door opened, Mme. de Tarente appeared, and we rushed into each other's arms.

'What are you doing here?' she said.

'I am waiting for you, so that you can show me yourself all the preparations you have made for us, and make me appreciate them twice as much.'

The supper was served cleanly and elegantly. My mother's suite was on the first floor, and she seemed well satisfied with it. My rooms, as also those of my husband and children, all very prettily arranged, were on the ground floor. We were very delighted to owe everything to our dear friend, but she thought nothing good enough.

CHAPTER XI

1802

1. The Faubourg Saint-Germain—The ladies of the *ancien régime*—Buonaparte—The Court of the First Consul—The two societies—Countess Golovine refuses to appear at the Tuileries. 2. The King's livery—'Ah! the good times are coming back!'—New friendships—Pauline de Béarn—The round of the shops—Saint-Sulpice—Heroes and heroines of the scaffold—The Duc and Duchesse de Mouchy. 3. The Opera and the play—Buonaparte at the theatre—The indiscreet mirror—The suppers in the Faubourg Saint-Germain—Mme. Tallien—The salon of Mme. de Montesson. 4. The Picpus cemetery—Russia contributes to the purchase of the ground—The salon of Mme. Divov—'New France'—Berthier and Mme. Visconti. 5. The Parisian poor—Mlle. Legrand—The two Terrors—M. de Ségur—The Duc and Duchesse de Luynes—M. de Talleyrand—Affecting memories. 6. Ball at the Austrian Embassy—'The old and the new.'

I

I saw our pretty little garden next day. Mme. de Tarente was very anxious to make me acquainted with her relatives, and introduced me to the Duchesse d'Uzès, her sister, just then in Paris with her husband, whom I had already met at St. Petersburg, he having escorted Mme. de Tarente from London. The Duchesse de Châtillon, her mother, was at the Château de Wideville, at a distance of about five and twenty miles from Paris. She arrived two days later, with Mlle. d'Uzès, her granddaughter, and I went as far as Versailles to meet her. She received me with great kindness and gave me flowers from her garden.

Two days later, the Comte de Caraman, an old friend of my uncle's, came to see us too, and brought with him his

three daughters: the Vicomtesse de Sourches, the Vicomtesse de Vaudreuil, the Vicomtesse de Barchy, and his granddaughter, Mlle. de la Farra. We made acquaintance without ceremony and in an hour's time were as much at ease with one another as if we had spent our lives together. Mme. de Sourches called attention to this fact.

'It is quite simple,' I replied: 'I was only waiting to love you.'

Mme. de Tarente took me to the Hôtel de Charost, but only the Comtesse de Sainte-Aldegonde and the Comtesse de Béarn were at home—the Marquise de Tourzel, their mother, and the Duchesse de Charost, their sister, being away in the country.[1] Mme. de Sainte-Aldegonde welcomed me with naturalness and simplicity, but Mme. de Béarn, throughout our visit, was coldly polite, as if weighing me in the balance. I have rarely met more interesting personalities than these two, or any combining so many virtues.[2] Mme. de Châtillon and Mme. de Tarente took me to see Mme. de Clermont, the Princesse de Tingry, and the Comtesse de Luxembourg, who lived in the same house as the Comtesse de Montmorency-Tancarville, her sister. We also called upon the Duchesse de Gêvres, the last of the Dugueselins, and the Duchesse de Béthune, the sister of Mme. de Tarente's father, with whom resided her granddaughter, Mme. Eugène de Montmorency.

The Duchesse de Béthune received me in her crimson-upholstered bedroom, seated in a large armchair, with a chiffonier by her side, and a little pug-dog, on a square of grey taffeta, on her lap.

I also became acquainted with the Comtesse de Choiseul

[1] Louis-François Bouchet de Sourches, Marquis de Tourzel, Grand Provost of France, had several children: Henriette, Duchesse de Charost; Anne, Comtesse Louis de Sainte-Aldegonde; Charles, Marquis de Tourzel; Josephine, Comtesse François de Sainte-Aldegonde; Pauline, Comtesse de Béarn, author of the *Souvenirs de Quarante Ans*, and Emmanuel Louis Joseph. Mme. de Tourzel, who was widowed in 1786, had been appointed governess to the Royal children the day after the taking of the Bastille.

[2] Pauline de Béarn had been the companion in captivity, in the La Force Prison, of the Princess of Taranto, whose courage and devotion she never afterwards ceased to extol.

and the Comtesse de Sérent, her sister, and, indeed, my acquaintances increased every day, for people were glad to welcome the friend of Mme. de Tarente. Mme. de Tourzel returned from the country, with the rest of her family, and the Duchesse de Charost came at once to see me and invite me in the most charming manner to come to see her on the Friday, the day her mother received.

This interesting and worthy family all lived in the same house. I went there with Mme. de Tarente, and met a number of ladies of the *ancien régime*, among others the Duchesse de Duras, the Princesse de Chimay, who had been her friend for forty years, and the Princesse de Léon, Mme. de Tancarville's sister-in-law.

At this time Buonaparte was Consul and held his court at the Tuileries. The society I saw was in striking contrast with that to be met with on the other side of the river. It was the quintessence of the old noblesse, with its principles preserved intact—the victim of the Revolution. The mind and heart could expand in this rare atmosphere, in which all one had to do was to enjoy what was offered; the prevailing tone, the grace and, in particular, the principles professed, attracted and charmed me, and I delighted to visit where I was always sure of a welcome, and of meeting with the same cordiality and natural amiability.

I was soon on the footing of a sister at the Hôtel de Charost and the Hôtel de Caraman. The friends of both families overwhelmed me with attentions, and my self-esteem might have been flattered had I had time to think about it. But I was too much touched to think of myself.

Count Markov, our Ambassador in Paris,[1] came to ask me for what sixteenth[2] I should like him to put down my presentation to the First Consul.

'You surprise me,' I said to him. 'What! Do you

[1] In disgrace during the reign of Paul I, on account of the favour he was in with Zoubov, Count Arcadius Ivanovitch Markov, born in 1747, died in 1827, was appointed Ambassador in Paris, on the accession of Alexander I.

[2] Buonaparte held a reception on the sixteenth of each month.

think I will go to that bear-garden ? I did not come here to degrade myself.'

'But, if you do not go, it will be too marked. All your compatriots have been presented, and the English, the Poles, the Germans,—no one has stayed away.'

'Even if the Chinese have been, I will not go ! '

'You will be wronging Mme. de Tarente, for they will think that it is she who has advised you, and things will be made so unpleasant for you that you will be obliged to leave France.'

'I shall be delighted to leave France, in support of my principles, and as to Mme. de Tarente, nothing can happen to her except that she might be sent out of the country, and that will be no great trouble to her.'

Count Markov, seeing that he was not gaining his point, said no more, but did not relish the prospect of being questioned, and perhaps snubbed, on my account.

2

My carriage was soon ready for me, a very pretty one, with two seats, drawn by horses with short tails, cropped in the English manner. My livery was blue, red, and black, with gold-lace, and I had hats in the French style, with feathers the colour of my arms. By a pure chance, this livery was similar to the undress livery used by the King of France, and was not without its effect on loyal hearts. Carriages were few at that time, and liveries did not exist, for people were afraid of the sensation they might produce in the streets, but I was determined to brave everything.

I got into my carriage, followed by two tall footmen, and went to pay my visits to my compatriots. When I reached the Rue du Bac, I saw the people making signs of delight, while the women climbed up on anything available, and, making the sign of the cross, cried out :

'Ah ! the good times are coming back ! '

I passed the Pont Royal, the Place Louis XV, and stopped

in the Champs Elysées, at Mme. Divov's. She had seen me coming, and was petrified with amazement at my courage in having dared to go out in proper style in the streets of Paris.

'Heavens!' she said, 'Is it possible that they did not insult you?'

'On the contrary, they were delighted to see me.'

'Andrioucha,[1] my love,' she said to her husband, 'order our livery to-morrow.'

M. de Markov also followed my example, and had one made. I received a great many visitors at my mother's, people being most kind and attentive to her. She was very pleased with her rooms, and had only to open a door to find herself in the garden, where there was a terrace covered with roses, to which she had a little arbour of honeysuckle added. Her health improved greatly, her nervous attacks having entirely ceased to trouble her since we left.

I went nearly every morning to see my new friends, especially to the Hôtel de Charost, with Mme. de Tarente, and I took my second breakfast out. Mme. de Béarn thawed at last, and threw off her reserve completely. I even preferred her to her sisters, although they were good and amiable women, Pauline's touching appearance, her gentleness, her dignity, and all that had happened to her during the Revolution only adding to her charms. She had three children, two delightful girls, the elder of whom died after I left Paris. The younger, however, was my favourite. Mme. de Sainte-Aldegonde's children were older, and became companions for mine.

I went round the shops, which are unique for their wealth and variety. You need only wish and open your purse to find more than you have dreamt of or desired. Mme. de Chatillon suggested one day that we should go to Sick's, a shop that from time immemorial had sold English goods. Almost as soon as we entered I saw a tall, handsome woman come in, and when I asked her name learnt that she was

[1] Russian diminutive of the name Adrian, which in Russian is Adriane or Andriane.

Mme. de Médavy. I instantly changed colour and felt quite overcome, for I remembered that the Empress Elizabeth had often talked to me of Mme. de Médavy, whom she used to meet at her mother's, with other émigrés. The Empress sometimes amused herself by imitating with an exquisite grace, peculiarly her own, the curtsey of Mme. de Médavy, so it was natural that the sight of her should make me feel sick at heart. The shop, the goods, and everything round me faded from my sight, and I saw only the Grand Duchess Elizabeth. Sometimes it needs but very little to bring back painful memories.

I spent delightful evenings with my new acquaintances, whom I saw every day, until their company grew to be a habit that I could not dispense with. Sunday was a specially precious day. In the morning I went to Saint-Sulpice, one of the finest churches in Paris, where a number of priests officiated at Mass, which was sung by beautiful voices, accompanied by the organ. The harmony of the fugues and chords seemed to proclaim the glory of God and I never tired of listening, and of admiring the piety that ruled around me.

One day when, as usual, I was there, I saw two veiled ladies kneeling down. They had strikingly beautiful figures, but their faces were hidden and they were deep in their prayers. They both communicated, and afterwards returned to their places, without my being able to recognise them. When Mass was over, I stopped on the church steps, to speak to a good old soul, whom I knew, who sold old books, and an old man with white hair, who sold ivory crucifixes. Nearly every time I went I took away some of their wares, and they hailed my approach with delight. Having finished my purchases for that day, I was about to get into my carriage when I felt someone touch me from behind; I turned round, and found it was the two ladies I had seen in the church, and whom I now recognised as Mme. de Vaudreuil and Mme. de Barchy, her sister. I drove back home with them, and then went on to my Sunday breakfast with Mme. de Luxembourg, at whose house her whole family and the Tourzel family met every Sunday.

I was introduced to the Duchesse de Duras and the Princesse de Chimay, both of whom had been ladies in waiting to the Queen. Mme. de Duras was a living example of the qualities that most edify and most compel our respect, uniting in herself, as she did, both strength and nobility of character, sustained by real religion. She has the ease of manner of a great lady, and in appearance is tall and imposing. Mme. de Chimay is sweet and resigned, like an angel, thin and ethereal looking. The contrast between their two characters strengthens the bond between them, for they are most devotedly attached to each other.

They were particularly kind to me, and I received from them tokens of affectionate interest that I shall never forget.

Mme. de Duras used to make jokes about her friend's thinness. 'When I kiss her,' she said, 'I am always afraid that she will break.'

Mme. de Duras is the daughter of the brave Maréchal de Mouchy, who perished, with his wife, on the scaffold. As he was going to his death, he saw his friends weeping: 'Do not grieve,' he said: 'at seventeen, I rode to the assault for my king; at seventy-eight, I ride to the scaffold for my God.'[1]

When he was arrested, his wife insisted on being imprisoned with him. She was told that there was no order for her arrest—but she replied:

'I am the wife of the Maréchal de Mouchy,' and she succeeded in securing her own condemnation by repeating the same words.

[1] Philippe de Noailles, Duc de Mouchy, son and brother of two Marshals of France known as Ducs de Noailles, hero of the campaigns of Germany and Flanders, fought with glory at Hilkesberg, Fontenoy, Rocoux, Berg-op-Zoom, and Maestricht, filled several diplomatic posts, and governed Guyenne. He was arrested in 1794 in his castle of Mouchy, for having given shelter to some refractory priests, and executed. His wife, Louise d'Arpajon, was lady-in-waiting to the Queens of Louis XV and Louis XVI. Marie Antoinette called her Mme. l'Etiquette.

3

I went to the Grand Opera with my friends and was struck by the variety and elegance of the company, as also by the elaboration of the scenery, and by the orchestra. When I went to the theatre, I sat in Mme. de Charost and Mme. de Luxembourg's box, which was one with a grating in front, opposite to Buonaparte's. He stared at me several times, in a very pointed manner, through his opera glasses, and I returned the compliment, and, if my eyes had been daggers, the world would long since have been rid of the monster. In his box at the Opera he had a spring-mirror, which enabled him to see all that was happening in the pit.

When you arrived at the Opera it could be seen at once whether he was expected, for soldiers would be lined up at the door through which he was due to enter, and the little windows between the boxes and the corridors would all be covered up. He was afraid of everything, except committing crime. After the Opera, I used to have supper at the Hôtel de Charost, with the Tourzel family and Mme. de Tarente. It is impossible for anyone to be more amiable and charming than is Mme. Augustine de Tourzel, and, in addition, she has a very fine character. Her natural cleverness borrows nothing from others, but, like a brook, carrying flowers with it, offers nothing but what is attractive.

Two footmen brought in a round table, placed round it four little service-tables, and withdrew. An exquisite little supper, at which we waited on ourselves, gave added zest to our merry party. The most delightful chatter enlivened the evening, for there were no indiscreet witnesses to stare at us and listen, and seem to envy every morsel that we put in our mouths.

I sometimes went with Mme. de Tarente to take supper at the Hôtel de Caraman, where I spent delightful evenings. Mme. de Sourches has a most original wit, while Mme. de Vaudreuil's conversation is a combination of grace and

gentleness. Mme. de Barchy thinks only of Heaven, and one day she asked her father to make her a picture of his idea of Paradise. He painted a smiling country, peopled with shepherdesses with crooks and shepherds playing on the flute, sheep, brooks, rosebuds, and Mme. de Barchy, in a dress with a long train, plumes in her hair, and playing the guitar on a cloud.

Without any theoretical knowledge of drawing, M. de Caraman could nevertheless convey his meaning in an unmistakeable manner. He made a queer collection of sketches of all the fortunes and misfortunes of his life. I have known few old men so gay and so worthy of respect, and at the age of eighty-four he still retained all his faculties. The marriage of his youngest son, however, brought him to the grave, for nothing could console him for his alliance with Mme. Tallien, who was a famous beauty, but had a reputation beneath contempt.

Mme. de Kouchelev, on her arrival in Paris, took a suite of rooms in the Hôtel de Caraman, whose amiable owner she had known during her first visit to France. She proposed that she and I should call on Mme. de Montesson,[1] who received twice a week, and we went there one Wednesday. We passed through a suite of rooms, richly and elegantly furnished, and found Mme. de Montesson sitting in an oval drawing room, in which everything was arranged in exquisite taste. She herself was playing reversi, and Princess Dolgorouki, a blaze of diamonds, was sitting opposite to her with Mme. Zamoyska, the sister of Prince Czartoryski, a young and pretty woman. The two ladies had come from a dinner at Saint-Cloud.

They soon got up to go, and Mme. de Montesson rose to accompany them to the door, but I stopped her, saying :

'Madame, please allow me to do the honours to my

[1] Charlotte Jeanne Béraud de Lahaie de Riou, Marquise de Montesson, born 1737, widowed in 1769, and remarried secretly in 1773 to the Duke d'Orléans, the grandson of the Regent. Her intimacy with Josephine de Beauharnais gave her, at the moment, a unique position, and won her great favour under the Empire. She died in 1806.

countrywomen, and save you disturbing yourself on their account,' whereupon Mme. de Montesson called out :

' Princess ! Princess ! Mme. de Golovine will not let me show you out. Please blame her.'

The Princess looked confused, and I bit my lip to keep myself from laughing. Since my journey into Bessarabia, the Princess had left off speaking, or even bowing, to me.[1]

Just as we were about to leave the room, Mme. de Clermont pushed aside her card-table, and ran after me.

' You will not forget my Friday, Countess, will you ? I shall be honoured to receive you. But, Heavens, it is the day that Princess Dolgorouki has fixed for her ball, and of course you will be going there.'

' I shall not in the least mind giving it up, Madame,' I replied. ' Please do not thank me.'

Mme. de Clermont continued to pay me compliments, and I to protest, Mme. de Kouchelev being royally amused at the comedy.

Mme. de Montesson had been secretly married to the Duc d'Orléans, the father of *Egalité,* without the consent of the King, and was a rich woman on account of the property that the Duke had left her. Buonaparte persuaded her to open her house and to invite both the *ancien régime* and the new, but she was not able to bring them together for long. She has died since I left.

4

One morning, when I was calling on Mme. de Sourches, she told me that she had just been to see Mme. de Montagu, whom she had found busily engaged in her arrangements for a Mass for the Dead, which was to be said at the Picpus

[1] Since the accession of the Emperor Paul, Princess Dolgorouki had settled in Paris, where her salon attracted a brilliant company. Laharpe, the Abbé Delille, the Comte de Ségur, Mme. Vigée-Lebrun, and Mme. Récamier were among her intimates.

Cemetery, where several of her relatives were buried.[1] I asked Mme. de Sourches if it would be indiscreet on my part to ask to be present, and she undertook to plead my cause. The next day I received a kind and most affecting invitation from Mme. de Montagu.

I went, with young Mme. de Tourzel and Mme. de Gêvres, the one going to pray for her father, the other for her husband. We went right through Paris, and stopped at the door of the enclosure at Picpus. Mme. de Tourzel bore on her features the impress of grief, and on entering the church I was seized with an emotion that I seemed almost unable to bear. I ran my eyes eagerly over these tenderly resigned faces, then the Mass began, and all knelt down. In front of me I saw the Duchesse de Duras, who had lost her father, her mother, her sister-in-law, and her niece. A few sobs interrupted, now and again, the lugubrious death-chant.

A bier stood in the middle of the church. Towards the end of the ceremony, Mme. de Montagu came round to make the collection. She was a pale, fragile woman, and tears streamed down her face, but were powerless to destroy the angelic expression of her countenance. Her bright black eyes seemed to be sightless, and one of her cousins led her round on his arm. It was with difficulty that I refrained from dropping on my knees when she came up to me, and I was trembling and overcome as I placed my few louis in her bag.

The next day Mme. de Montagu came to thank me, and her visit was the beginning of a friendship between us. Afterwards I asked Mme. de Sourches to take me to see her, and we went to the Faubourg St. Honoré, Place Beauvau.

[1] The Picpus Cemetery is situated near one of the gates of Paris, known as the Barrière du Trône. Twelve hundred victims were slain there. When the Reign of Terror was over, the Princess de Salm, who had lost her brother, Prince Salm-Kyrbourg, a field marshal in the service of France, decapitated in 1794, tried to buy the ground, and made a collection amongst all those of her friends who were interested, like herself, in praying for some who belonged to them. The church, which had been profaned, was reconsecrated, and every year a solemn Mass was said for the victims, each person present making a contribution towards the upkeep of the pious establishment.

Mme. de Montagu sent word that she had business people with her, and could not ask me to go up, but that she would come down to my carriage to speak to me. She did so, and told me that she was in the greatest trouble, that three thousand francs were still wanting to complete the purchase of the Picpus ground, and that she had no means whatever of raising the sum, for the persons interested in the matter had already made every sacrifice in their power. I said :

' To-morrow one of the young men belonging to our legation is leaving for St. Petersburg. Shall I write to one of my friends and ask her to try to collect the sum ? They may be able to interest the Empress Elizabeth in the matter, for her goodness is unspeakable. Then you will pray for her, and I shall be overwhelmed with happiness.'

Mme. de Montagu put her arms round my neck and began to cry : ' Since I first saw you,' she said, ' I felt that you would be our consoling angel.'

I asked her to write to Mme. de Tolstoy, and to enclose in her letter the paper that M. de Lally-Tollendal had written about Picpus. All was carried out to the letter. The payment was not due to be made until the month of October, and this was May, so there was plenty of time. Mme. de Tolstoy willingly undertook the commission and the money arrived in due course ; the ground was bought, and Mme. de Montagu was overjoyed. Prayers were appointed to be said for the Empress, and I felt this moment one of the sweetest in my life. I thank God that I was in Paris at the time, for without the help that I was thus the means of procuring, the ground would have continued to be government property and the church would have been abandoned and the cemetery destroyed. Now it is watered with the tears of pious affection and the most heartfelt and touching prayers rise from it to our All Merciful Father, both for the victims and the persecutors.

After this, Mme. de Montagu came to see me twice a week, and divided her evening between Mme. de Tarente and me. On those days my door was closed to everyone. Here is one story that she told me of the Picpus cemetery.

Among the victims had been a man named Parisse, who had been in the service of the Duc de Castries, and who had left a wife and a daughter in abject poverty.

After religion and affection had been able to reconsecrate this mournful spot to the memory of the victims, Mlle. Parisse had never omitted to visit it twice a week, whatever the weather, and although she lived six miles away from the bloodstained spot, which she came to water with her tears. Her mournful and unhappy appearance struck the caretaker, who spoke of her to Mme. de Montagu, and she at once exerted herself to find Mlle. Parisse, and, after many unsuccessful attempts, discovered her, living with her mother, in a fifth storey room, where they worked at mending old lace, having no other means than what they earned at this work. Mlle. Parisse, by practising the strictest economy, and by depriving herself of actual necessaries, managed to save fifty francs for the collection for the Picpus cemetery. Mme. de Montagu's interview with her confirmed her in the good opinion she had originally formed of her.

I always dined at home in my mother's room, and usually we had visitors. The men we received most often were MM. de Montmorency, de Tourzel, (the husband of Augustine de Béarn), Pauline's husband, Olivier de Vérac, de Conflans and de Croy. The Chevalier de Montmorency, the youngest of three brothers, had a great gift for music, and the relatives of Mme. de Tarente, the Duchesses de Duras and de Gêvres, and the Princesses de Chimay and de Tingry often dined with us. This latter is the mother of Mme. de Luxembourg.

I used to go out for a few hours in the morning, and again late in the evening, and devoted the rest of my time to my mother and my various occupations. In my absence my mother had a doctor with her, who lived with us solely on her account, my children also spent their recreation time with her, and Mme. de Mercy, her companion, never left her. I could have enjoyed nothing, had I not felt certain that all was well with her.

Mme. Divov pounced upon me one day and asked me to dine at her house with Mme. de Kouchelev, assuring me that we should be almost alone, and that none of the new régime would be there. I only gave her my answer when I knew what Mme. de Kouchelev was going to do, and the two of us went together. Our first surprise was to see the Duchess of Santa Croce, a Roman lady, an old coquette of sixty, with a red wig, and dressed in the antique style. This Gothic apparition quite took my breath away, and when Mme. Divov dragged me to her to introduce me and told her that I was the niece of M. de Chouvalov, whom the Duchess of Santa Croce had known in Rome, the frightful old woman fell on my neck, and uttered wild cries of delight saying :

' Oh ! How happy I was with him ! '

I never witnessed such an extraordinary scene in my life. I tore myself from her arms and went to take refuge with Mme. de Kouchelev, who hardly knew what to do, and we both laughed heartily. But we were still more astonished to see Mme. Visconti, a marvellous beauty, who had reached the age of sixty without a wrinkle or the least fading of her charms, and who was the declared mistress of Berthier. The Roman lady held out her arms and she rushed into them with all the abandon of the tenderest affection. My companion and I sat down to admire the comedy, and they obligingly placed themselves in a corner opposite to ours, and whispered and gesticulated together, Mme. Visconti looking by turns all smiles and ready to cry. Everything promised a winding up in keeping with these sentimental preparations. M. Berthier came in and Mme. Visconti assumed a touchingly victimised expression, while the mistress of the house and the Duchess kept whispering to her with great warmth, one on each side. Berthier gradually drew near to her, and his fair lady gazed at him like a dying duck in a thunderstorm. We were in the best seats for the show.

The carefully prepared reconciliation was one very easily effected.

We waited impatiently for dinner, hoping that it would bring about some diversion in the amorous intrigue, but we were destined to be spared nothing. Mme. de Kouchelev and I sat together at table, and our husbands, who were side by side, opposite to us, looked daggers at each other. The eloquent silence around us made us quite hot, and the lovers clasped each other's hands with such vigour that the lady could not help now and again making a grimace, while the Duchess and Mme. Divov were overjoyed at their success in bringing about this touching reconciliation.

After dinner coffee was put on a centre table, and Berthier undertook to do the honours. I took none and slipped towards the door, Mme. de Kouchelev after me, and we drove off together in my carriage.

'Let us go either to your house or to mine,' she said, 'I am half-choked. Whatever sort of a place is it that we have come from?'

'A pestilential spot,' I replied. 'We shall have to disinfect ourselves when we get in.'

We vowed that we would accept no more invitations to grand dinners.

5

I have never seen poverty like the poverty in Paris. No wretchedness elsewhere can be compared with it. Mme. de Barchy, after dining with me one day, suggested that I should go with her to see a poor woman who was ill, and who lived in a room on the fifth floor of a house not far from mine. I agreed willingly. We went up, and up, and at last, at the end of a long corridor, opened a door and found poor Mlle. Legrand, formerly the proprietress of a well-known underlinen shop, but now, at over sixty years of age, completely incapacitated, with one arm and one leg very much swollen, and the other side quite withered. She was sitting in front of an enormous fireplace, without any fire, gazing at an empty pot, and praying.

We stopped to listen to her. She did not see us, and went on: 'My God, wilt Thou keep me long without help?'

'No, God, it is impossible. Thou knowest my misery and my resignation. Thou wilt not let me perish, Thou wilt save me from the hunger and thirst that devour me.'

I went up to her and laid a few louis in her lap.

'This,' I said, 'is the reward of your trust and resignation.'

She looked at me, unable to speak, but her dim eyes filled with tears, and she wrung my hand with the little strength that remained to her.

The sight of misfortune teaches us to realise the agony of real privation, and when I am suffering under some temporary trouble or discomfort, I think of Mlle. Legrand, and many others with no roof but the sky and a few ruins to shelter them. I shall never forget the ragged women I saw holding in their arms their half-dead babies, with staring eyes that seemed afraid of missing one last ray of hope. I often stopped in the street to give them assistance, urged by two motives, the first, to relieve distress, the second, to say 'Pray for Elizabeth!'

One day that I had gone to fetch home Mme. de Tarente, who was at Mme. de Beaumont's, I was waiting outside in my carriage when a woman, the picture of abject misery, came up to me and said in a faint voice 'An alms, if you please, good lady, in the name of God and the Holy Virgin!'

She showed me her crippled arms, and I took six francs from my purse and gave to her. She uttered a cry and fainted. My servants gave her some water, and when she revived, I asked her what had caused her collapse.

'It is years,' she replied, 'since I have seen so much money. I have eaten nothing for two days, but I must make haste home now to my mother, who is starving.'

One afternoon, M. de Ségur, of whom I have already spoken, was announced. I received him very coolly, but he tried to seem at his ease, and alluded to his stay in St. Petersburg as the happiest time in his life.

'Very cruel things have happened since I saw you last, Madame; I have had much to suffer, but you, too, have been through your time of terror.'

'What time of terror do you allude to?'

'Why, the reign of Paul—'

'Your comparison is as misplaced as it is unthinkable. Can you compare a legitimate sovereign, with a noble and generous character, to Robespierre, a criminal despot and the head of a band of ruffians?'

'But after such a glorious, such a happy reign as that of Catherine II, you must have suffered, in comparison!'

'I need not apologise for the gratitude I feel towards the late Empress, and my admiration for her, but I must do justice to the virtues of her son, whom I cannot compare with the miscreants that some Frenchmen bow down to. I am nevertheless charmed to see that you pay homage to the memory of the Empress. You would be more than ungrateful, more than guilty even, if you were to forget her kindness to you.'

M. de Ségur changed colour. He had been sent to Vienna by the Directorate, and, while there, had written a libellous pamphlet against the Empress, which he could not but suppose I was acquainted with, at any rate by reputation. So at these last words he rose to go and did not come again for a long time. He was also afraid of facing Mme. de Tarente, it appeared, for one morning, when I had driven her to see an English lady whom she knew, and was waiting for her outside in my carriage, M. de Ségur came past on foot, recognised me, and came to speak to me. In a minute or two he asked me for whom I was waiting.

'Mme. de Tarente' I replied, 'she will be here in a moment.'

'Your servant, Countess!' and he hurried off.

Mme. de Tarente introduced me to the Duchesse de Luynes whose house was distinguished by the company to be met there; for, although her husband was a Senator and his position brought her in contact with the new régime as well, their beautiful salons were filled with the

old noblesse only, though M. de Talleyrand certainly used to go, and played at *rouge et noir* with bankers.

I amused myself by watching him, and we looked as if we could kill each other. There is an expression of calculating knavery about his cunning, squinting glance, and his livid, trembling hands are positively repulsive ; he looks a criminal to the tips of his fingers. I remember a delightful answer he received once from Mme. de Raigecourt, which was repeated to me at the Hôtel Caraman by Mme. de Roure.

Mme. de Raigecourt had been attached to the person of Madame Elisabeth, and she owed all she had to this Princess. An important matter of business obliged her to have recourse to M. de Talleyrand and to ask for an audience, for which he fixed a day and an hour, but she arrived a little late.

' I am sorry,' said M. de Tallyrand, ' that you are late ; I shall not be able to give you long. Where have you been ? '

' At Mass.'

' At Mass ? To-day ? '

It was an ordinary day. Mme. de Raigecourt replied respectfully, with a curtsey :

' Yes, Monseigneur.' [1]

It must not be forgotten that M. de Talleyrand had been Bishop of Autun. He felt the subtle rebuke and hurried through his business with her, fearing lest he might have another such to swallow.

Mme. de Raigecourt had an exceedingly ready wit. One day Madame Elisabeth gave her a ring made of her hair, with the three initial letters of her name on it, H. P. E.

' You know what that stands for ? ' she said.

' Yes, Madame, *Heureuse par elle* ' (happy through her).

From her earliest youth, Madame Elisabeth's character gave promise of every virtue. She combined with the most tactful kindness an energy that only increased as she grew older. The King, her brother, used to give her jewels every year for a New Year's present, so one day she begged Mme. de Polignac to ask His Majesty to give her the value of the presents in money, not being able to make up her mind

[1] The correct mode of address, in French, to a bishop.

to ask him herself about so delicate a matter. The King acceded to her wish, and in this way she amassed a considerable sum, which she settled on Mme. de Raigecourt.

On another occasion, Mme. d'Aumale, who was likewise attached to Madame Elisabeth's person, was disgraced and sent away from the Court, and Madame Elisabeth, timid though she was about anything concerning herself, went to the King, and begged him to allow her to continue seeing Mme. d'Aumale, saying that she did not know what she had done wrong, but that, in spite of the respect due to His Majesty's orders, she did not think it just to withdraw her favour and confidence from a person from whom she had never received anything but kindness and affection. The King approved her reasons and allowed her to do as she wished. Madame Elisabeth was then only fifteen years of age.

The pure body of this angelic Princess lies in the garden of Monceaux, which, during my stay in Paris, belonged to Cambacérès.

6

One day I met Count Cobenzl, the Austrian Ambassador, at the Hôtel de Charost. He had come to ask the ladies of the house, and me, to a grand ball, and warned us that we should meet there persons both of the old and the new régime. We accepted at first, but when he had gone, calculated that the date of the ball, the 20 January, would be the anniversary of the death of Louis XVI. The same thought occurred to the whole of the Faubourg Saint-Germain, and the Ambassador received notes of excuse, explaining the reason of the refusals. Count Cobenzl was so much touched by this unanimous impulse that he put off his ball for four days, although he had already issued all his invitations to the new authorities. Under these circumstances, we were obliged to accept.

I went to the ball with my friends. When we got out of our carriages, we were received by the entire Austrian

Legation. Each of the gentlemen offered his hand to one of us, and we were escorted into the Ambassador's salon. Our conductors then left us, with a deep bow, to which we responded by a curtsey. The Ambassador then took possession of us and took us to the ball-room. There was a seat down the middle of the room, with a free passage all round it, the space left being sufficient for the dancing, while the musicians were seated in tiers against one of the walls of the room. A negro, named Julien, a famous violinist, led the orchestra, and was accompanied by a tabour and a fife, while a man standing some distance away beat time with a roll of music, and called out the figures of the country-dances.

We sat down on the centre seat and the ball commenced. Mme. Moreau,[1] a pretty, modest, and graceful woman, was admired by everyone, and her husband, who was dressed in ordinary civilian dress, devoured her with his eyes. The uniformity and exactness of dancing are carried in Paris to a degree of perfection that is absurd. The sight before my eyes entertained me very much, especially as I was surrounded by all my friends.

As I was talking to Augustine de Tourzel, I suddenly felt something very soft pressing against me, and turning round, saw a woman of uncertain age, with her dress and hair arranged with great pretension in the fashion of the day, and wearing a black velvet gown and a prodigious quantity of diamonds, who was pushing me with her stomach, and exclaiming :

'Ah ! there is Madame la Présidente ! Madame la Sénatrice is down there in the corner. How beautiful she is ! I was at her house yesterday. How pleasant she is ! Just see how kindly she is looking at me ! '

And she began to drop curtseys to the ladies, with her mouth all pursed up, and her eyes ready to start out of her head. I asked a gentleman who knew the names of everybody, who this extraordinary person was.

[1] Jeanne Hulot, wife of Jean Victor Moreau, the victor of Hohenlinden. She followed him into exile, to America.

'She is Madame Nicole,' he replied. 'Two years ago, she kept an inn; now her husband is a president.'

'And the young woman who is dancing so nicely?'

'That is Mme. Michel. Her husband was a famous assassin during the Terror. He has been made a Senator, through the influence of Cambacérès.'

Madame Lucchesini, wife of the Prussian Minister, was one of the most extraordinary-looking figures. She was a tall, foolish-looking, dark woman, with coarse features, and a bold and common appearance. Her eyebrows were painted black, and the veins on her temples an azure blue, her cheeks a beautiful carmine, and the rest of her face simply plastered with paint. Mme. Lucchesini, although getting on in years, danced like a fury, and as she grew warm, the hues of her complexion ran one into another till, towards the end of the evening, she looked like a besmeared palette. Overcome with admiration for the Buonaparte family, the tears that fell from her eyes as she gazed at them melted the black that she had darkened her eyelashes with, and gave her a terrified look, while her eyebrows, which had run with the heat, lent her an expression of gloomy sorrow.

I had time to admire her at my ease after supper. She had just been dancing a *sauteuse* with M. Lanskoy,[1] one of my compatriots, who had amused himself by giving her a good shaking. She was panting like a horse after an arduous race, and at the same time holding her breath, out of exaggerated respect for Mme. Murat, sister of the First Consul. Her exceeding deference only permitted her to occupy the extreme edge of her chair, and this constraint, which pervaded her whole person, made her look like a parody princess. The fresh, cold face of Mme. Murat threw her strange mask into greater relief.

Stewards, in costumes chequered with gold, entered every room, to announce the supper, carrying long poles, at the end of which hung ruled sheets with numbers on them. There were the same number of sheets as of tables, and on each was printed in large letters: *Supper is served.* We

[1] A relative of the celebrated favourite of Catherine II.

were invited for No. 1, which was the table of Old France. The room was very large, and our table, placed in the middle, made us seem to be dominating the others. The Generals, the Senators, and all the great dignitaries walked about among us.

I stayed at the ball until seven o'clock in the morning, and could not tire of admiring the striking line of demarcation between the women of the old régime and the new, and the efforts that the women of the new made to imitate those of the old, while the latter did not seem to be even aware of their existence.

CHAPTER XII

1802–1803

1. Illness—Portal—The surprises in Paris—The consequences of the Revolution—New manners. 2. Art in Paris—Robert—Charms of the Parisian spring—A strange case of catalepsy. 3. Painful memories—The last days of Marie Antoinette—Her last companion—The Mass in the prison of the Conciergerie. 4. Rupture of Buonaparte with England—The camp at Boulogne—The First Consul and Louis XVIII—Stay in the country—Passy—Chantilly—A literary neighbourhood—Mme. de Genlis—A village wake. 5. Versailles—Country life in France—The grape gathering.

I

SHORTLY after this ball, I fell very ill. My complaint, which had been coming on for years, was brought to a head by the change of climate. The Tourzel family and the Caraman family were with me continually and took turns to nurse me, some in the morning, the others in the evening, and the elder Mme. de Tourzel made me send for Portal,[1] and have my right side examined. He found that my liver was obstructed, and several glands congested, and I also suffered very much from my head, my pulse was irregular, and my breathing difficult. I was ordered artificial Vichy water, and was handed over to the care of a doctor named Halley, who was very kind and did not lack skill. I felt very ill for a few days, and my first thought was God, my second, the Empress Elizabeth. I wrote to

[1] Antoine, Baron Portal (1742–1832), a celebrated doctor, the author of several works on anatomy and therapeutics.

her and sealed my letter, intending to give it to Mme. de Tarente to send to her after my death. But the remedies employed took effect, and I soon felt relief, and in a month resumed my ordinary mode of life.

One of the religious ceremonies that I was most struck with in Paris was the Adoration of the Cross, on Good Friday. Mme. de Tarente took me to several churches at midnight. The prayer is offered up in subterranean chapels, the Crucifix alone being illuminated, and a priest reads the office in a low voice. All the persons I saw seemed plunged in pious meditation.

I love all that appeals to the intellect and soul, and Paris satisfies both to the utmost. A walk through the streets is in itself a moral lecture. Churches converted into theatres, old residential hôtels into fashion shops, worthy persons, descended from the most illustrious families, compelled to go on foot in the mud—a crowd of inconsistencies, the result of the total upheaval, incessantly strike one, and you pass from surprise to surprise.

Mme. de Matignon, daughter of the Baron de Breteuil, who had been Ambassador to Russia at the beginning of the reign of Catherine II, was walking along one day, out of pure inclination, for she had a carriage, and between the Rue du Bac and the Rue de la Planche, just as she was passing a vegetable-shop and a tobacconist's, a shower of rain came on. It so happened that the Duc de Praslin was just driving past, and he saw Mme. de Matignon, and, stopping his carriage, offered her a seat by his side. But he had not had the politeness to take off his hat when speaking to her, and the vegetable seller was shocked and cried out to her neighbour :

' Why, look, Daddy, here is one of the new aristocrats attitudinising ! Look at him ! His hat looks as if it were glued to his head. He is never one of our real gentlemen, who are always so polite to the ladies.'

This little scene showed how even the people in the street noticed the manners of the new régime. The Duc de Praslin had behaved very badly during the Revolution, and adopted the revolutionary manners.

One day I met the elder Mme. de Tourzel on foot, in abominable weather. She was walking quietly along, with an umbrella, and I felt ashamed to be driving in comfort and splashing her with the mud from my carriage wheels, so I pulled the cord and begged her to get into my carriage.

'I only accept your kind offer,' she said, 'for the sake of the pleasure of your company. Do you think I mind the mud? Not at all, I assure you. I could, if necessity arose, endure hardships, but I confess that I take a sort of pleasure in suffering them, when I reflect that my unfortunate master is living on the alms of his equals.'

I drove her home and went in with her, for I appreciated more every day the society of her delightful family.

2

I spent a good deal of my time painting, for one's taste for art is encouraged when it is easy to gratify it. Robert[1] dined with me every Thursday and always left me a sketch that he began at two o'clock and that at four was hanging on my drawing-room wall. Part of what I know I owe to Robert, for there is no better way of learning than watching a great artist at work. He told me about his adventure in the catacombs, which is so ably narrated by the Abbé Delille in his poem 'L'Imagination.' A story is doubly interesting when it is told by the hero of it.

Nothing could be more delightful than spring in Paris. You begin to enjoy it from the early part of February, when the air grows fragrant, and the shrubs begin to be covered with flowers. My house was enclosed by four gardens, that belonging to the Foreign Missions Society, de Vérac's, de Monaco's, and Mme. de Châtillon's. The three first-mentioned were on the three sides of my own, and only separated from it by a stone wall. To reach the fourth, I had only to cross my courtyard and the Rue de Babylone,

[1] Hubert Robert, born 1773, died 1808, a celebrated painter.

which was very narrow, and I found myself surrounded by syringas, lilacs, jasmine, and honeysuckle, and among beds of roses and lilies. At the end of this beautiful garden I could see the house in which Mme. de Tarente lived with her mother.

I liked being present when Mme. de Châtillon was dressing, for her dressing-room had all the good old arrangements of the France that seemed to me the only real one. It was full of small pictures and souvenirs of every kind, and I used to examine these little objects, each of which had its own associations, while Léonore dressed her mistress's hair. Everything was clean and dainty, everything was in good style, and, in the little accessories I recognised the imprint of the taste and character of her to whom they belonged.

The evenings in France are almost as warm as the days. Often I remained until quite late in the little arbour in my mother's garden, in the moonlight, or even in total darkness, listening to the murmur of the immense world without, and musing.

One evening I made out in the dark the figures of two women who, after opening the door in the wall between the de Vérac garden and mine, were coming towards me, and I strained my eyes in vain to see who they were. In a moment, however, I distinguished the voice of Mme. de Lacoste (formerly a Mlle. de Vérac), and went to meet her. 'I am bringing Mme. de Damas[1] to see you,' she said. 'She has been anxious to meet you for a long time.'

We paid each other the usual compliments, and Mme. de Damas expressed most kindly and charmingly her gratitude to me for the interest I had taken in her son. Her voice, as well as her manner of expressing herself, is most pleasing, and I said to myself: 'This is a very charming young woman, but I have not the least idea what she looks like.' The manner in which we had made each other's acquaintance struck me as rather piquant, and I did not

[1] Marie Louise Aglaé Audrault de Langeron, born 1753, married to Lieutenant-General Comte d'Antigny, a peer of France, died in 1827.

press Mme. de Damas to come into the house for some time.

At last, however, I had to do so, and on entering my little round drawing-room, with its lamps all round, we looked at each other with an eagerness that made us both laugh. I thought Mme. de Damas's face beautiful, but Mme. de Lacoste is as plain as she is witty and unfortunate. She suffers from a most extraordinary complaint: sometimes she falls into a lethargic stupor that lasts over ten days. They put her to bed, and there she remains without moving, and without eating or drinking: were it not that her pulse beats, one would say that she was dead. Her brother, Olivier de Vérac, told me that one day, her lethargy having lasted longer than usual, he fell on his knees, crying:

'Lord, will this condition last much longer?'

And suddenly, without opening her eyes, she signed to him to come near and motioned that she wanted to write. He gave her some paper and a pencil that she took without moving, and, still with her eyes shut, she wrote: 'Do not be alarmed: it will not last much longer. Send me (here she wrote a person's name) to-morrow, and do not let anyone else come in.'

Her wishes were carried out, but Mme. de Conflans, an intimate friend of hers, expressed a great desire to be in the next room during the mysterious conference. The following day, when her brother was with her, she made signs again that she wished to write, and asked why Mme. de Conflans had been in her room the day before, when she had forbidden it. The next day she got up, with no knowledge of what had happened.

The Princesse de Talmont, the sister-in-law of Mme. de Tarente, who has seen her in her trances, cannot explain these strange cases of somnambulism, and no doctor can account for them. Her unheard-of sufferings are perhaps the reason of them, for her husband was a wild revolutionist, who took her only son from her and brought him up as a perfect savage, trying to destroy in him all religious principle, and every spark of affection for his

mother. He has since married an actress by whom he has six children, and Mme. de Lacoste would have nothing to live on, but for her brother Olivier, who pays her the most touching attentions.

My terrace overlooks the garden of the Foreign Missions Society, and from it I watched one day the procession of the Sacred Host. Altars of repose were placed in different parts of the garden, and a number of priests in rich vestments surrounded and followed the Host, borne by the curé under a canopy. The deacons preceded it, with long censers, and children dressed in white, with blue sashes, carried baskets of flowers which they strewed in the way. From time to time the procession stopped to burn incense, and the rumbling of the serpents, a kind of horn, could be heard accompanying the singing. All prostrated themselves, and the beauty of the day added still more to the solemnity of the spectacle.

3

I went one morning with Mme. de Tarente to see the Princesse de Chimay, and the Princess begged her to go again the next day as she had something interesting to tell her. In the evening Mme. de Tarente came in to me, and when we were alone, I asked her what was the matter, for I thought her looking sad and alarmingly pale.

Mme. de Tarente then said that Mme. de Chimay had told her she knew a person whose piety and charity had succeeded in opening to her the doors of all the prisons in which Robespierre's victims languished, and that when the Queen was removed from the Temple and shut up in the Conciergerie, this prison became the object of Mlle. X.'s solicitude. She had the skill, the courage, and the strength to penetrate into the horrible dungeon which harboured the Queen of France, and, disregarding the dangers of her affecting and self-imposed task, had presented herself before the unfortunate Queen and offered her religious consolations.

The Princesse de Chimay had told Mme. de Tarente that she ought to go and see this woman, who had heard of her, and who, perhaps, would have some message to send by her to Madame, at Mittau, should she be returning to Russia with me. The woman knew that the Princess intended to take a friend to see her, but not that it was Mme. de Tarente.

They found her living on the third storey of a very poor house, a stout little old lady, with legs as thick as her body, who had great difficulty in moving about.

The two visitors had much trouble to get her to speak of the Queen, and she refused several times to do so.

'But, pressed by the Princesse de Chimay,' went on Mme. de Tarente, 'Mlle. X. gave us the terrible details of the deplorable state in which she had found the Queen, her unprecedented sufferings, and her even more astonishing patience. The Queen was deprived of all attentions, and at a moment when she was in need of the greatest care. Her dress was of coarse cloth, she had no linen, and her stockings were all in holes. She slept on an absolute pallet, and her food was so hard and so bad that the fork stood upright in it.

'The prison was damp, and two men, so-called guards, were shut up with her night and day, and only separated from her by a ragged screen. Some of these men, less inhuman than the rest, showed her pity and seemed to regret being obliged to force their presence on her and add to her sufferings. Mlle. X. penetrated into this horrible prison, but for a long time the Queen repelled her advances, being unable to believe that she had come to her out of disinterested kindness and desire to help, and taking her for one of the horrible creatures who made friends with prisoners in order to betray them. Mlle. X. was not discouraged, and persisted in explaining her motives, until at last she won the confidence of the Queen, and was able to bring her consolation.

'For several weeks, the Queen was the object of her solicitude; money, which had been the means of opening the prison doors to her, was not lacking, thanks to the generosity

of friends, and several times Mlle. X. succeeded even in bringing the Queen a priest disguised in the uniform of the National Guard. Once she was present at a confession, that the Queen made, mingled with tears, at three or four yards' distance from her. Mass was even said in the cell, nothing being lacking for its celebration.

'Mlle. X. told me further:

'"The Queen often spoke to me of one of her ladies of whom she was particularly fond, and with regard to whose fate she was uneasy; she often came back to the subject of this lady, saying that she loved her, and was dearly loved by her, and that she was sure she was very unhappy." . . Mlle. X. could not at first remember the name; which the Queen had repeated several times, "Ta . . ." and she could not recall the rest. But I guessed, and was very much overcome, for my heart told me that the object of her unselfish concern, in the midst of her own frightful misery, was myself. Without stopping to reflect any more, I flung my arms round Mlle. X.'s neck, and mingled my tears with hers.'

'This admirable woman then recognised me.

'"Doubtless it is you of whom the Queen spoke," she exclaimed, "I see it by the feeling you show. You are Madame de Ta . . ."

'I told her my name, which she remembered at once.'[1]

Mme. de Tarente was greatly overcome by what she had heard. She saw Mlle. X. several times again, alone, and assured herself, by a few skilful questions, of the degree of confidence that the Queen had reposed in her, and of the truth of the extraordinary relations that she had had with that unfortunate princess. Mlle. X. spoke to her of all the persons at the Court whom the Queen had honoured with special favour, and she found that she knew exactly the

[1] The account given by Mme. de Tarente produces in certain of its details the impression that she was in this circumstance the victim of her own credulity. Often discussed, the fact of the celebration of Mass in the Queen's prison seems, besides, to have been absolutely controverted. In her letters to Countess Golovine, the Princesse de Tarente mentions the name of this lady, which was *Fouché*.

degree of affection each one had inspired in the Queen, the attendant circumstances, in fact, everything. . .

'The Queen, in her prison, had made a vow to give twenty-five louis to the poor,' said Mlle. X. . . 'She was not able to keep her vow, nor have I been able to do it for her; Heaven destines this consolation for you.'

It was the Duchesse d'Angoulême who redeemed the vow, through the medium of Mme. de Tarente.

Mlle. X. also related that, the Queen not having a cup, she took her one, which Her Majesty used up to the last moment and asked that it might be given to her daughter, if that should ever be possible. Mme. de Tarente undertook to deliver it, and herself gave it into the hands of Madame, as she passed through Mittau, Madame acknowledging its receipt in writing.

Mlle. X. made Mme. de Tarente a present of a picture that she had had made at the Queen's request, a pansy, the centre of which is a skull, while the four yellow leaves show on their edges the profiles of the King, the Dauphin, Madame Elisabeth, and Madame. The stalk emerges from a heart, and at the bottom are these words: *Pensée de la mort.*

Mlle. X. would have given all she had to Mme. de Tarente, whose heart was so much in sympathy with her own. Mme. de Tarente took me with her on one of her visits, and I saw with my own eyes what she had already told me of this rare and beautiful union of piety and charity. We went on foot in a driving rain, but I was very glad to suffer something in the school of patience, resignation, and forgetfulness of self.

Mlle. X. received me with a kindness that I owed to the intercession of Mme. de Montagu. I offered her a few louis for her poor, but she asked me to give them to M. Charles. I remained with the worthy ecclesiastic, to allow her to talk freely with Mme. de Tarente.

The face of M. Charles is in keeping with his language. I was deeply touched at what he told me and often recall his words.

Some persons have wished to dispute with Mme. de Tarente the possibility of some of the facts related by Mlle. X., among others, the Mass in prison. But how can one refuse to give credence to the words of a virtuous creature, who has no worldly applause in view, who disdains wealth and honours, who has no thought but religion and the good of her fellow-creatures, and who tries to hide her benefits to others with all the scrupulosity of a sensitive heart? For that matter, the priest [1] repeated the same circumstances to Mme. de Tarente, as he was about to go to the Altar. Would such awful perjury issue, at such a moment, from a mouth that opens only to relieve and console the unhappy?

We know it beyond all doubt: the Queen received the Holy Communion, and her Guards received it with her.

Mme. de Tarente took leave of Mlle. X. the day before she left, after hearing in her Oratory a Mass said by M. Charles. She retained the most comforting recollection of the five or six visits that she paid to this saintly woman. Mlle. X. was known to Robespierre, to whom she once spoke with amazing freedom. He knew what her daily occupation was, and never placed any obstacles in her way.

4

Buonaparte fell out with England. To appease the nation that was growing dissatisfied with war, he tried to distract the people and interest them by the sight of preparations for an invasion. He went from one dockyard to another, to superintend the work, and the idlers ran up to watch, but no one was deceived, and the walls became covered with placards.

[1] The before-mentioned M. Charles. This man was a priest who had succeeded in avoiding arrest and persecution, and had remained at liberty in Paris during the Terror. He would himself have ministered to the Queen in the Conciergerie, had he not been seriously ill at the time, but he told Mme. de Tarente that he had the good fortune to be able to render this important service to Mme. Elisabeth, during the twenty-four hours that she spent at the Conciergerie, and to soothe her last hours.

Méhée,[1] a Jacobin, devoted to Buonaparte, who had been living in London for some years, had managed to force himself into the circle of the faithful subjects of King Louis XVIII. He persuaded them that the discontent of the French was at its height and that a favourable moment for the triumph of their cause was at hand. He kept the First Consul informed of all he did, and the latter, for his part, did his best to assist him in his perfidious plans, the result of which we shall shortly hear about.

To give an appearance of legitimacy to his projects, Buonaparte proposed to Louis XVIII that he should renounce the crown of his fathers. The reply made by the King of France to this insolent demand is well known. Buonaparte was furious, and forbade, under pain of death, the circulation of the letter. At the time it was thought that the people would resort to violence, and fears were even entertained for the safety of foreigners. I never shared this uneasiness and was confirmed in my feeling of security by several persons of the lower classes, who said that they would rush into every house inhabited by the Russian lords, and save them, for they owed them too much not to preserve them from every danger. The English were arrested harshly, and taken to Verdun.

These events took place in the spring (1803). We spent the summer of this year in a country-house in the village of Passy, some fifteen minutes from Paris. The house was charmingly situated in a garden of terraces, that dropped down to the river Seine. You pass from one to the other by stone steps, enclosed by handsome iron work, overgrown with vines. The upper terrace, which is well shaded, was our drawing-room. The others were full of fruit-trees. My mother occupied the best floor, and my rooms were at the top. On my left I could see Paris, lying as though on a tableland, and on my right, the plain of Grenelle. Farther on, rose the roofs of several castles and country-houses, Meudon, amongst others, which had belonged to Madame, the aunt of Louis XVI.

[1] Méhée de la Touche, a celebrated writer.

My mother sometimes remained after midnight on the terrace, to see the fireworks that were sent up from different places, the hamlet of Chantilly, the Champs Elysées, Frascati, or Tivoli. I had difficulty in persuading myself to go to bed, and remained alone for hours at a time, gazing at the beautiful moonlit landscape spread out before my eyes, a mild, calm night making me appreciate the delights of a pleasant climate.

Our house was in the lower street, and the road ascended straight up to the Bois de Boulogne. I went there several times, on Sundays, with my friends the Caramans. We walked about, ate ices in the open air, and went into the pavilion from time to time to watch the dancing. There were a great many people present, and there were pretty dresses and smart-looking people. An entertainment without ceremony and without formal etiquette affords freer pleasure, for you arrive and leave when you like, and are not bound to take any one into special consideration.

One drive that I had with Mme. de Tarente wound up in too novel and agreeable a manner for me to be able to forget it. We were returning at about eleven o'clock one night from a drive to Paris and were crossing the Champs Elysées, when I noticed a garden on the right all illuminated, and Mme. de Tarente told me it was a fête that took place twice a week in the hamlet of Chantilly, and that one could go in for a payment of thirty sous. We paid at the gate, they gave us tickets, and we went in.

The hamlet of Chantilly had belonged to the Prince de Condé, and we saw a charming garden, prettily illuminated, some fireworks, and, in the palace, a very lively ball going on.

There were games in different parts of the garden, and, for our thirty sous, we also had ices. We were not in full dress and did not attract any attention, so that we were able to enjoy the scene at our ease, and returned home to Passy delighted with our experience.

At Passy, I had three rather noteworthy neighbours: Mme. de Genlis, whom I would never see or meet, and whom I would rather read than hear; the Abbé Gérard, the author

of three valuable works : *Les Leçons de l'Histoire, la Théorie du Bonheur,* and *Le Comte de Valmont,* and Mme. d'Arblay, née Miss Burney, known by her delightful novels.

There are coincidences that give a kind of importance to the most trivial incidents. One evening, when I was out walking, a little King Charles spaniel ran up to me, fawned on me, and managed to make me understand that he wanted to go into the house in front of which I was standing. I opened the door for him, and he dashed in, so I inquired whose dog he was. I was told that he belonged to Mme. d'Arblay, née Burney. I had never thought, when reading her books, that I should one day open the door of her house for her dog, and be fawned upon by him.

One evening when I was out very late, with Henrietta, in the High Street, I saw at a house door a worthy old dame in a mob-cap, with her husband, who was wearing a cotton cap with a tassel, surrounded by a group of girls and boys. The old woman was talking and gesticulating, and was being listened to with the most rapt attention. I stopped to hear what she was saying, and she noticed me and said :

' Would you like to listen, too, my pretty lady ? '

' I should, very much,' I replied.

One of the young men offered me a stool, but I preferred to remain standing, and the good woman went on with her story. Ghosts and the rattling of chains were not sparingly introduced, and the girls clung one to another, apparently much frightened. Just then, from a large house near, I heard the strains of one of Mozart's concertos played on the violin with great precision and exquisite taste. I stood motionless, oblivious of the rustic scene I had been watching, and memories thronged in upon me, memories that had little connection with an evening in a village street.

I walked home in silence, too deeply plunged in thought to wish to speak.

Mme. de Tarente divided her time between her mother and me, and I took advantage of her visits to Passy to go for long walks with her.

We went one evening to Auteuil. It was a beautiful

evening and we walked on without thinking of the time, until the fading light warned us to retrace our steps. Thinking to shorten the distance, we decided to cross some fields, near the Bois de Boulogne, but lost our way, and darkness overtook us when we were wandering about in the neighbourhood of the Bois, which was anything but safe. My confidence in Mme. de Tarente, however, prevented my feeling nervous, for I was so much in the habit of relying upon her that her very presence seemed a safeguard.

But it was growing steadily darker, and we were walking painfully over stubble that hurt our feet, and feeling our position unpleasant. At last I descried a woman walking along at a short distance from us, so we hurried as much as we could and managed to overtake her. She was old, and was carrying on her back a basket that impeded her progress.

'My good woman,' I said, 'take us to Passy.'

'With pleasure, my good lady, follow me. We shall soon be at the wall that separates us from the High Street.'

And we very soon found ourselves quite near home. I tried to thank our conductress, and pay her for the service she had just rendered us, but it was with great difficulty that I prevailed on her to accept a six-franc piece. The French peasantry are kind and obliging, without any thought of return, as I had many opportunities of proving.

5

Mme. de Tarente proposed that I should pay a visit to Versailles and see over it more in detail, for I had only received an impression of it when I went to meet Mme. de Châtillon. Everything in this interesting spot bears the impress of greatness. Everywhere you fancy yourself back in the noble and dignified century, the memory of which will always endear France to us. The savage Revolution had swept over the castle of Versailles, and the fleur-de-lis bas-reliefs had been torn away, but some remains of them were yet to be seen, as a consolation to faithful hearts.

I went to the Grand Trianon, and wandered through the salons of Louis XVI, and, as I went, I said to myself: 'Verily, *That all comes to an end* is the finale of our reflections.' I feasted my eyes on the majestic park of the Trianon, and sitting on the steps of the Colonnade, which connects the two wings, from time to time I cast a glance behind me at the marble parquet that had been trodden by the feet of the great King, and the rare combination of beauty, talent, and merit by which he had been surrounded, and on whom nature seemed to have lavished so many gifts, to leave behind them nothing but regret. My mind seemed incapable of responding to all the impressions made upon it, for we are doubly struck with the sight of places of which we have heard and read so much.

My husband went to spend a couple of days with Mme. de Tarente at the Château de Roncy, the home of the Duchesse de Charost, I remaining with my mother until his return. Afterwards I too went there, with Mme. de Tarente and the Comtesse de Luxembourg, whom I persuaded to accompany us, as a pleasant surprise for the Duchesse, who is particularly fond of her. We went to Paris to fetch her, and afterwards started along the Rheims road at about twelve o'clock at night, that we might arrive at our destination the next morning. We passed Villers-Cotterets, the famous country-seat of the Duc d'Orléans. The forest near the castle is immense, and of the greatest beauty; it is traversed by the mail route, and, at certain distances apart, you come to little hunting lodges, at which several avenues terminate. I recalled as we drove through this forest a crowd of interesting details that I had been told about it, and I noticed, with admiration, the extremely beautiful vegetation.

We reached Roncy about twelve. The castle, flanked by four turrets, stands on high ground, and, as we entered the pretty paved courtyard, Mme. de Charost, Mme. de Béarn, M. and Mme. de Tourzel and all the children ran out to meet us, and were most delighted to see Mme. de Luxembourg. We found the elder Mme. de Tourzel in the drawing-room, and she opened her arms wide to us. This drawing-room is

a large, square room, with a huge window on each side ; in front of one of these windows are writing materials, and near it a harpsichord, with music lying upon it. The mantelpiece is covered with papers and pamphlets and convenient articles of furniture are grouped round. In the middle of the room is a large work-table, and there is another for any incidental occupation, while the children have a corner for their toys.

The family usually rose at eight o'clock and, after dressing, went to pay visits to each other's rooms. I went to embrace Pauline, whose room was next to mine, and of whose society I was especially fond. The company met in the drawing-room for breakfast, which was a gay meal, and afterwards we all went into the vineyards to the grape gathering, which is one of the most enjoyable experiences I can think of. Each one takes a pair of scissors and a basket, and you cut the fine, luscious grapes : the people sing, and the children are in the seventh heaven of delight.

After spending a little time in our own rooms, over our private affairs and our dressing, we went back to the drawing-room, where each one busied himself or herself according to his own taste and inclination. A pleasant freedom reigned over all, and an agreeable conversation broke in from time to time upon our occupations. Nothing was prepared beforehand, the entertainment emanating naturally from good breeding and the pleasure of the meeting. The dinner was perfect, and, after a short rest, we went out for a walk again.

The evening seemed to bring with it an even greater feeling of confidence and unrestraint. The elder Mme. de Tourzel, who was linked with Mme. de Tarente by the bonds of common sentiments and principles, often talked with her apart. Mme. de Tourzel is very absent-minded. Once, when Mme. de Tarente was sitting on a footstool at her feet, she said to her suddenly : ' Get my candle and light me, I want to go into my room,' a remark which roused great merriment in her daughters, who knew she was quite unaware of what she had done.

Mme. Augustine de Tourzel possessed a wonderful combination of useful and attractive gifts. One day I went into her room before breakfast, and found her with her little Léonie, aged eighteen months, sitting on her knee, while her elder girl, between four and five, was learning her catechism by her side. Mme. de Tourzel explained it to her, from time to time, and, in between, was committing to memory a marquise's part that she was going to play at the Château d'Hauteville.

'You amaze me,' I said, 'you can do everything at once.'

'My dear,' she replied, 'it is only a matter of making up one's mind. I devote my thoughts to the one thing and give an occasional glance at the other.'

My visit to Roncy gave me a true idea of what life in a French castle is like: I found it more delightful than anything I had heard or read about it. At the end of three days I left my friends to return to my mother and children. We drove again through the forest of Villers-Cotterets, this time by night, and saw it under quite a different aspect: great flashes of brilliant light shone in various directions, from fires lighted by makers of wooden shoes, whose figures stood out black against the flames.

The trees, illuminated by the moon and the firelight, looked gloomy and majestic, and I thought of the Duc d'Orléans' conjurations in this forest, and of the power that he claimed to possess over spirits, and of which he used to give proofs at Court. I allowed my imagination to rove freely, and steeped myself in dreams of magic, but I saw neither ghosts nor spirits, nothing but a fertile and magnificent country, and I pitied the unfortunate prince who had been incapable of enjoying it.

CHAPTER XIII

1803–1804

1. Return to Paris—Buonaparte tries to pick a quarrel with Russia—News from St. Petersburg—Increasing delights of Mme. Golovine's stay in France—A rival to Bossuet—The Abbé de Boulogne—Charity in Paris. 2. Saint-Germain: 'Vive le roi!'—Mlle. de Protassov—The Mont Calvaire—The cemetery of the Madeleine. 3. The death of the Duc d'Enghien—Pichegru—Georges Cadoudal—The two Polignacs—Buonaparte Emperor—Countess Golovine threatened. 4. Dugazon—*Sertorius* at the Comédie Française—The Emperor's anger—The new 'Princesses of the blood'—Plans for return—The list of the émigrés—Moreau and the Comte de Choiseul-Gouffier—How to get a passport. 5. The trial of the Polignacs and Cadoudal—Mme. de Polignac and Josephine—A pardon dearly bought. 6. Last moments in Paris—Execution of Cadoudal and his accomplices.

I

We returned to Paris at about the end of October, and it was a great pleasure to me to see my kind friends again. About the same time, Count Markov came back from taking the waters at Barèges. Buonaparte invited him to dinner and attacked him on the subject of a French émigré whom he regarded as a suspect, and who had been well received by Russia. This petulant outburst was only an attempt to pick a quarrel with us, for war was necessary to his plans. Count Markov replied in a noble and dignified manner to the Emperor's remarks and upheld his own country. He sent a report of his action to the Court at St. Petersburg. The Emperor's reply was the ribbon of the Order of Saint Andrew.

M. de Markov, not liking the First Consul, tried to obtain

the entrée into the society of the old noblesse, and now approved of the attitude I had all along taken up. I realised with regret that I should have to leave Paris sooner than I had intended, and was distressed to be obliged to give up the happy life I was leading, a life so exactly in harmony with my own ideas. My pleasures were real and genuine, and the repose of mind that I had recovered was still more precious to me, after all the anguish that my poor heart had endured.

I often heard from the Countess de Tolstoy, who sometimes gave me news of the Empress Elizabeth. When we are far away, our love for our own country is keener, and I was eager to hear what was going on at home. The Ministry had been reorganised at St. Petersburg, and the post of Procurator General, which combined all sections of the Civil and Internal Administration, was divided into several departments, in imitation of France. Each department had its Minister, Count Alexander Vorontsov [1] was appointed Chancellor, and Prince Adam Czartoryski head of the Department for Foreign Affairs.

These innovations were a trouble to all good Russians, for they were dangerous: it is imperative to preserve the character of a government intact, when it has been consolidated by custom and experience.

Mme. de Tolstoy had a son during my absence, and her health became much impaired.

The second winter that I spent in Paris was still pleasanter than the first. Some of my acquaintanceships developed into real friendships, my opinions and my general behaviour having earned me the confidence of those whom I esteemed most, and I can truthfully say that the only inconveniences of any kind that I suffered in Paris were the result of two storms, which were so violent as to carry away several of my chimneys, and cause some accidents.

The day after one of these storms, Mme. de Luxembourg was spending the evening at my house, with the three

[1] Alexander Romanovitch (1741–1805), brother of the celebrated favourite of Peter III, Catherine Romanovna.

Caraman sisters, and their eldest brother. Someone said that Heaven was wroth, and that perhaps it was the forerunner of the end of the world. Mme. de Luxembourg exclaimed vivaciously :

' Indeed, I hope not ; I have not done my packing ! '

To which Caraman responded quickly :

' Ours will not take long ! our family travel light.'

We laughed at his confession, the storms were forgotten, and the evening passed off very merrily.

I went to Saint-Roch to hear a sermon by the Abbé de Boulogne. He preached on Truth, and as I listened to him I seemed to be hearing the ringing eloquence of Bossuet. The oratorical art of the Abbé de Boulogne is carried to high perfection, and he knows how to inspire terror in his hearers, and touch their hearts at the same time. He has a fine, sonorous, bass voice, his intonation is true, and his appearance imposing. The rapt attention of the congregation was striking, and the church was crowded. A few young fops who had come in with the intention of jeering sat motionless during the sermon, and went away when it was over, looking crestfallen. As I came out of church I met three of them arm-in-arm.

' I must admit that the lesson was hard,' one of them said, ' but it was fine. We must come and hear him again.'

I also heard the Abbé de Boulogne pronounce two panegyrics, of which the one on Saint Augustine was the finer, though I was even more affected by the address on Saint Vincent de Paul, the founder of the sisters of Charity. I went to hear it at the Abbaye-aux-Bois with the Tourzel family, and we sat on a platform, from which we could see the orator splendidly. The sisters were all seated opposite to the pulpit, and their modest and deeply religious appearance added to the impressive character of the ceremony. Their uniform costume, which consisted of black dresses, white fichus and white linen caps, distinguished them from the rest of the company. Their heads were bent, and their faces were bathed with tears of gratitude and emotion. The congregation were deeply moved.

The Revolution only dispersed the sisters for a little time. On my departure from Paris, nearly ten thousand had already reassembled.

The second son of M. de Caraman founded a small home for poor children and he invited me to go and see it. I found a house containing four rooms, in one of which were little boys reading and writing and learning their catechism, while a sister of charity, who was already old, superintended the lessons. In the other room, little girls were learning the same, and they were being taught by a young sister of eighteen, of quite angelic beauty. Her face and her youth struck Mme. de Tarente and me.

'How, at your age,' I asked her, 'could you make up your mind to this work? Was it misfortunes, or unforeseen circumstances, that compelled you to make such a sacrifice?'

'Pardon me, Madame, I have done it of my own free will. I belong to a wealthy family in Languedoc, and I have always wished to devote myself to the service of my fellowmen. I am one of four sisters, and my mother does not need my care, so that she allowed me to do as I wished, for which I never cease to be thankful.'

She said it in a very touching manner and a tender expression stole into her eyes, as she noticed the interest we took in her.

Her beautiful black hair was almost hidden under her cap, the dead whiteness of which could not detract from the loveliness of her brilliant complexion. She coloured as she spoke to us, and seemed even more lovely.

2

In the spring, my rambles and drives began again. I went to Saint-Germain with the Tourzel family, M. de Béarn undertaking the arrangements. He had a table set out on a delightful lawn, and meanwhile we rambled about the famous forest, and saw the castle and the terrace which

overlooks all Paris and its environs. I thought of Louis XIII, so weak and so handsome, and of his too famous Minister, and, as we walked in the forest, was surprised to see on several of the trees ' Vive le Roi ' cut into the bark. This testimony from a few faithful hearts, in large bold letters, interested me very much. The storms had respected the simplicity of the wooden documents, very much to be preferred to the vain displays of pride, and the inscriptions had been cut in so high up, on beech trees, that it was impossible to get at them without a dangerous climb. Evidently enthusiasm had lent superhuman strength to those responsible for the inscriptions.

We remained at Saint-Germain until the evening, and returned by the delightful route of Saint-Cloud. I prefer a forest to all the gardens and parks in the world, for I love the touch of Nature about its wildness, and feel the mysterious calm of the forest a refuge for my thoughts.

At some distance from Paris we stopped in a little village to drink cider, and re-entered the city through the Champs Elysées. The approach to this great city always has the same effect upon me. It is enough to be away for a short time, for a day even, to be struck as on the first occasion, by its tumult and restlessness.

Countess Protassov arrived in Paris, hoping to impress the inhabitants, and pose as one of the great ladies of her country. I went to call upon her, and was received very graciously, but her kindness increased when she learned the life I was leading and the society that I moved in. She came to see us, and met some of the ladies I knew, amongst others Mme. Augustine de Tourzel, whose grace and amiability made a great impression upon her. The next day, I went shopping with Mme. de Charost, and on coming out of Vertpuis's, a draper in the Rue de Richelieu, we saw the Countess de Protassov in her carriage, which was pulled up a little way off. Mme. de Charost begged me to drive up, so that she could watch her face while I was speaking to her. I did as she asked, but Mme. de Protassov saw at once that I had someone with me, and asked me in Russian who it was.

I put my head out of the window and told her in a low voice that it was the Duchesse de Charost.

'Introduce me,' said the Countess.

I turned to my companion and said to her with as serious a countenance as I could command:

'Duchess, will you allow me to introduce to you Countess Protassov, lady-in-waiting to Their Imperial Majesties of All the Russias.'

The Countess poured forth a stream of compliments, to which Mme. de Charost replied most charmingly; then asked her a few questions about her visit to Paris, which quite delighted the Countess, and led to so many polite remarks and such a flow of conversation that they would have been at it still, had I not cut their amiability short by asking permission to go on.

'I must admit,' said Mme. de Charost, 'that it is quite an entertaining experience to be introduced to a lady-in-waiting in the middle of the street.'

Mme. de Béarn suggested that we should go and see the Mont Calvaire, so we went, with her husband and Mme. de Tarente. This is a spot that was specially venerated before the Revolution. Pious souls made frequent pilgrimages to the Convent which is situated at the top of the mountain, and there had been, at intervals on the way, large crosses and altars of repose, to remind one of Our Lord's passion. But the cannibals destroyed everything, persecuted the monks, and those who were not able to save themselves by flight were martyred. However, five or six of them, disguised as peasants, managed, by courage and almost miraculous perseverance, to remain in their holy solitude.

When the Terror was over, one of the heads of the sanguinary band bought the place, and the five hermits obtained permission from him to make little gardens half way up the hill, on condition of a payment of six hundred francs a year. His cupidity made him tolerate the good monks, who, by dint of care and labour, managed to hand over the agreed sum, being thus enabled to devote themselves

to their edifying vocation and to cherish the hope of dying in the spot which they had sworn not to leave.

The monastery is surrounded by a pretty wood, which is intersected by footpaths, leading to chapels. Father Hyacinthe took me into the cloisters, and we went down a long corridor, the two walls of which were covered with frescoes representing the sufferings of Jesus Christ. A dim light came in through a window at the end of the corridor, and the monotonous sound of the footsteps of the monks, echoing under the vault, alone broke the deep silence.

I saw, on my right, in the interior of the building, a square courtyard, the walls of which were covered with inscriptions.

'Those,' said Father Hyacinthe, 'are the graves of our brothers. The stone in the middle covers the blessed remains of our sainted Founder.'

He told me afterwards, with deep feeling, the history of this Founder, and gave me an engraving of him.

I inspected the church, which was simple and well cared for. These monks divide their time between prayer and the labours of the kitchen garden. The weather was warm and overcast, and there was no wind. I gazed interestedly at the diversity of the sights that were before my eyes, and the calm of the cloister and that of its inhabitants made me meditate deeply on the nothingness of the world, and its useless agitations.

But the clouds piled themselves up, the storm broke, and a warm rain fell in torrents ; however, we went quietly down the hill, through it all, for the air was so pure and so perfumed by the shrubs round us that we could not make up our minds to be indoors. Several times I turned round to look at the mountain, which seemed to rise higher and higher as I descended. We went into a cottage during the worst of the storm, and afterwards we set out on our walk again to find the carriage that was waiting for us at the bottom of the mountain.

Robert had told me about the cemetery of the Madeleine, where the body of Louis XVI had been thrust, and nine

months later, the Queen's. A good bourgeois, who lived in a house overlooking the cemetery, had seen them put the bodies in and throw lime on them. When the Terror was over, he bought the ground, closed the wall, and troubled about no one whose opinions were not well known to him. To put the culmination to their atrocities, these bloody wretches had placed the heads of the martyrs between their legs. Chance so willed it that all the persons who perished at the marriage of Louis XVI, as well as the Lifeguards who were massacred at Versailles, are buried at his feet. In the opposite corner, where the refuse is thrown, lies the body of the Duc d'Orléans (Égalité).

Robert knew the owner, and offered to ask permission for us to visit the cemetery; the man gave it and I went with Mme. de Tarente and Pauline de Béarn. We went in through a little yard belonging to the house and the daughter of this faithful subject came out to meet us; her father was out, but she led the way to a small enclosure and opened the door with a large key that she carried with her; a kitchen garden covered a considerable portion of a square piece of ground, in the middle of which was an orchard, but in one well-cared-for corner is a rather large piece of turf in the form of a coffin, surrounded by weeping willows, cypress, lilies, and roses. There it is that the remains of the King and the Queen repose. Mme. de Tarente and Pauline clung closely to each other, and the pallor of their faces expressed more than grief. I knelt down on the sacred turf, and gathered a few of the flowers that had sprung up of themselves, filled with undefinable and inexpressible emotions.

I filled my handkerchief with pansies and everlastings, but my two companions seemed nailed to the spot. We had to go, however, at last. I sent for some little lockets, in two of which I put the flowers, and gave one to Mme. de Tarente, the other to Pauline, keeping one for myself with some plain grass in it.

3

Buonaparte was meditating a fresh crime. He went to the Council (in March 1804) and proposed the abduction of the Duc d'Enghien, declaring that he was a suspect. The Council rejected the proposition, and Buonaparte said no more, but went out and on the spot sent the cowardly Caulaincourt to Ettenheim (in the Grand Duchy of Baden on the right bank of the Rhine) where the Prince was, to bring him to Paris. Despite the violence of the arrest, for he was not, as Buonaparte knew, on French soil, the Prince had no idea that he was being taken to his death. He was kept in Paris only a few hours, and then taken to the Château of Vincennes, which had belonged to his father. The rapidity of the journey had overwhelmed him with fatigue, and he flung himself on a bed in the room that had been prepared for him, and fell into the sleep of innocence.

At midnight they came and woke him.

'What do you want with me?' he asked.

'You must appear to submit to your cross-examination.'

'What about?'

He received no reply. He followed his conductors quietly, and when he arrived before his judges, or rather, his butchers, they asked him his names, and Christian names, and condemned him to death. He asked for a priest, but was refused one.

'One moment's heartfelt prayer is enough to obtain God's mercy,' he said; then he fell on his knees, and prayed for a few moments with great fervour. When he had finished, he rose, and said:

'Come, let us have it over.'

He was led to one of the ditches near the castle. It was a dark night, and a lantern was fastened to his heart, so that they could not miss it, and they tried to bandage his eyes, but he said:

'It is not necessary. A Bourbon knows how to die.'

'Kneel down,' they told him.

'I only kneel to God.'

Nine muskets were fired at once, and he fell into the ditch, where his body was covered over with earth.

I heard of his arrival in Paris the same evening. Knowing that the First Consul was trying to arrest all the subjects of the King whom the perfidy of Méhée had brought to Paris, we felt justly uneasy. Pichegru was one of the first to be discovered, after he had been in Paris three months, and he was put in prison ; when he was found strangled in his cell they tried to make his murder pass as suicide.

The day after the arrival of the Duc d'Enghien and his assassination, Mme. de Tarente came to see me. She was pale, and could hardly stand, and it was in accents of despair that she told me :

' The Duc d'Enghien was assassinated last night. I have just heard of it from Duras.'

I was appalled and profoundly indignant at the news, and one and all were revolted at the ferocious outrage. Even the bloody Thuriot (Jacques Alexander Thuriot de la Rosière, one of the most violent of the revolutionaries) said that Buonaparte had felt the need of a glass of human blood. Fouché said : ' It is worse than a crime, it is a blunder,' an abominable but very characteristic remark. Placards covered the walls, the police tore them down, and they reappeared the next day. The names of Caulaincourt and de Savary were execrated, for the one had brought the victim to his death, and the other presided over his execution.

The police were seeking everywhere the brothers Polignac and the virtuous Georges, and every feeling heart shuddered and would have wished to save them.

It was while he was meditating all these crimes that Buonaparte had himself proclaimed Emperor. A general appeal was made to the nation to confirm this new act of pride by signatures, but they could not get a single page filled.

No one could leave the town without a ticket. Mme. de Charost, who required one to go to her castle, was obliged to go to the prefecture herself to obtain it.

There she saw people who had been brought in by force from the streets to sign. An old charcoal-burner, who had been forced in like the rest, said : ' You want me to shine ? ' (his pronunciation).

He was told, yes.

' Well, then, I won't shine.'

Mme. de Charost had all she could do to help bursting out laughing.

Mme. Idalie de Polignac, the wife of the elder brother, who was unaware that her husband was in Paris, proposed that we should have some music at my house, but on condition that my door should be locked, and that we should only have Rivière to accompany us, and Mme. de Tarente to listen to us. Rivière came, but at ten o'clock Mme. Idalie had still not arrived. We made all sorts of conjectures, but she did not come. Next day we learnt, to our very painful surprise, that M. de Polignac and M. de Vaudreuil-Caraman had been arrested.

I hastened to Mme. de Sourches and found her door closed, which made me feel still more uneasy. Then I went to make enquiries about the two fresh victims, and on my return home I found a note from Mme. de Sourches in which she told me that she had only refused to see me, out of discretion, for I was suspected. In the interrogation to which her sister had been subjected, my name had been mentioned, and she had been told that her friendship with me was known, and that they were quite sure she was trying to procure a pension from Russia.

Mme. de Vaudreuil had replied that she was certainly a great friend of mine, and that I had done everything for her that a generous friend could do, because I always tried to assist the suffering, that her affection and devotion to me were eternal, but that she had never dreamt of asking for a pension from Russia.

' We shall soon see what sort of a person this foreign friend is,' said the gentlemen ; ' we will go and pay her a visit, and see how she receives us.'

This threat had made Mme. de Sourches afraid of doing

me an injury by receiving me, but she only redoubled my desire to see her, and I flung myself into my carriage, and forced my way in. She was as touched as she was surprised to see me.

'Fear nothing,' I said to her, 'I am proud of being mixed up in M. de Vaudreuil's case, and I am waiting for these gentlemen quite undauntedly. Let them come! I will have them all thrown out through the window!'

They did come, the next day, but the appearance of our establishment was a little too imposing for them to dare to insult us, and they withdrew, without asking for me.

Mme. de Polignac was at the Conciergerie, in a most alarming state of health and most terribly concerned for her husband and her brother-in-law.

Mme. de Brancas, her cousin,[1] at first asked to be imprisoned with her, but afterwards, supported by the surgeon's testimony as to Mme. de Polignac's critical state of health, asked permission to take her to her house, and obtained it on condition that she should be guarded there as a prisoner, and that no one should see her.

Mme. de Brancas wrote me all these details and sent her letter by her cousin's maid, a faithful, intelligent soul, whereupon I made up my mind to go and see them the next day. I went through my garden, the de Véracs' garden, and the lower part of their house, and came out in the Rue de Varennes. It was the first time in my life that I had been out alone in the street in the evening, and I crept along close to the walls, to avoid being borne down by the crowd. As I passed in front of the Duchesse de G.'s big doors, I saw a woman sitting, with a basket of faded flowers, and she begged me to buy some. 'But, my good woman, they are hideous,' I said.

She came close to me and said, in a sad, uneasy voice: 'Madame, I am a poor beggar, disguised as a flower-seller. Since he has been Emperor, the poor are stopped in the streets, and sent to the Salpêtrière, where they are treated

[1] Henriette Pauline de Monestay de Chazeron, married in 1797 to Louis Albert de Brancas, Duc de Céreste, died in 1858.

like dogs. He wants to make people believe that there is no poverty, whereas it is everywhere.'

I gave her six francs, and left her quickly. When I arrived in the Rue du Bac, which I had to cross to enter the Rue de la Planche, I was stopped by the stream in the middle of the street, for it was very muddy, and I was afraid of jumping into the middle. While I was lingering at the edge of this tiresome little brook, a little alarmed at the noise made by the carts and carriages and the criers that were passing, two gallant strangers very respectfully offered to help me over my difficulty, so I took advantage of their kindness, thanked them very much, and hurried up the Rue de la Planche, where the Hôtel de Brancas was.

I knocked for some time, looking all round to see whether I was being watched, for I was afraid of compromising Idalie, but was anxious to show her how I felt for her in her troubles. At last, however, the porter opened the door to me, and I slipped inside the courtyard and ran to the door of the wing in which poor Idalie was lodged.

I found her in a shockingly nervous state, and her condition went to my heart. Mme. de Brancas received me with open arms, and we talked for a long time of the troubles and misfortunes that threatened her cousin. I left them when it was getting dark, and, when I arrived at the brook, emboldened by fear of the approaching dark, I gave a most successful jump, and arrived home, with a very uneasy and troubled heart.

Georges Cadoudal had been in Paris six months, and was crossing the street in a cab when he was arrested. The Polignacs, the Marquis de Rivière, Coster Saint-Victor, a page of Louis XVI, and many other loyal subjects were taken to the Temple, and while preparations were being made for their trial, Moreau came under suspicion and was sent to join them. Public indignation was at its height. The Monster trembled, and never slept two nights at the same place, but spent a great part of the day in a cypress arbour at Saint-Cloud, with a telescope, watching the Paris road, in constant dread of the arrival of a courrier to announce a revolt.

Mme. de la Rochefoucauld, whom I saw several times at Augustine de Tourzel's, told me that she had often happened to make a third when the First Consul and his wife were together, and that Buonaparte never spoke a word, but amused himself by making nicks in the furniture with a pocket knife that he always carried, and that it was easy, from the movements of his hand, to see the fury he was in. What a happy state of mind ! Hell is in his heart and all the demons of pride in his capacious brain.

4

Mme. Dugazon, who had for many years been a famous actress at the Opéra Comique, was about to retire, and a last benefit was being given for her. The actors of the Comédie Française were to give a tragedy, and unanimously selected Corneille's 'Sertorius,' on account of the scene in which Pompey burns the list of the conspirators, without reading it, as they wanted to utilise the incident to read a lesson to the Monster. He came to the theatre, but when the scene that I have just mentioned came on, he grew pale, and his mouth seemed to be convulsed. I remarked to the three Tourzel sisters, who were with me, 'He will choke with passion ! ' but he merely rose abruptly, and left the theatre. His departure caused a great commotion in the pit, and he went home furious.

Buonaparte was busy with the elevation of his relatives, and the conferring of titles upon them. His sisters and his sister-in-law became suddenly Princesses of the blood, and criers proclaimed them as such in the street. A few fishwives, who heard the proclamation, gave each other the titles of Princess Asparagus, Princess Spinach, etc., and were taken to the police-station, but they said loftily to those who arrested them :

'It does not matter what you do, we shall be none the less Princesses.'

When the Princesses of the blood appeared for the first time at the theatre, the people shouted :

' There are the Princesses of the blood ! ' and a few voices in the pit cried : ' of the blood of d'Enghien.'

It was a great gratification to me to hear that the Russian Court were wearing mourning for the Duc d'Enghien, and the fact made a great impression among right-thinking Parisians. M. de Markov was preparing to leave, and I saw myself obliged against my will to say goodbye to a country in which I had found again my lost peace and happiness.

Mme. de Châtillon asked me to go and see her one morning, and after a sort of hesitation, said to me :

' Please take my daughter with you.'

These words affected me unspeakably, but I did not dare to show the pleasure I felt, at the expense of the feelings of the poor mother, so I did not speak, but only bowed ; then, seeing that she was watching me closely, and seemed to be expecting a reply, I said : ' I shall not be starting for at least six weeks,' and then changed the conversation.

I was extremely puzzled to know how to get a passport for Mme. de Tarente. She had refused to have her name crossed off the list of émigrés, and I was afraid of calling attention to her, the more so as they were beginning to banish women, and none of those to whom I mentioned the matter were able to advise me. While I was considering the best way out of the difficulty, M. de Choiseul-Gouffier's valet was announced and handed me a note and an enormous Minister's portfolio, locked. M. de Choiseul begged me, implored me, and conjured me, to excuse his action, which was, he said, only the result of the profound esteem and confidence which I had inspired in him.

He was suspected, he wrote, on account of his relations with Moreau, and about to be arrested, and he begged me to keep for him some papers which would prove only too conclusively on which side his sympathies were, and so forth, and the note ended with a deluge of compliments upon my behaviour in Paris. I pretended to believe it all, but

I saw clearly enough that his action was only intended to make me report the integrity of his principles in Russia. And yet it was difficult not to suspect him. His friendship with M. de Talleyrand and all that he had obtained through his influence spoke against him ; a large share of his property had been restored to him, and all the antiquities that he had collected on his travels had been given back to him. His yard was filled with capitals and broken columns of the greatest beauty. It was no empty thing to be in the good graces of Napoleon.

The Duchesse de Gêvres asked my permission to bring Mme. de Choiseul-Gouffier to see me, and I replied that I should be pleased and interested to meet her. I found her a dignified and attractive woman, whose good qualities far outweighed her husband's merits, and two days later I returned her call. M. de Choiseul kept his eyes uneasily upon me all the time. He had not seen me since the sending of the portfolio, and he was afraid I should mention it before his wife, for he was ashamed to confess to her the farce he had been acting. I said not a word about it, although I was very much tempted to play him the trick, but spoke of my leaving and of the difficulty I was in with regard to Mme. de Tarente's passport. It was decided that he should send me a special messenger of his own, and a day and time were agreed upon, so then I asked Mme. de Tarente to be present, to help me, since I knew nothing of the forms of procedure in use in the Government, and she was with me when the mysterious man was announced.

His appearance alone was remarkable. Imagine a tall, shrivelled old man, with a pale olive complexion, piercing coal-black eyes, a long sharp nose, thin blue lips, a huge mouth and enormous teeth, and of a general appearance very much resembling a skeleton's. He wore a light grey dress coat, a long striped waistcoat, pantaloons, grey stockings, and little round buckles on his shoes. His hair was dressed in a very old-fashioned manner, with a curl over one ear, and tied behind in a Prussian queue, that reached below his waist.

Never had such a sinister-looking apparition presented itself before me, and for a few moments I sat there speechless, for the awful-looking creature by no means inspired me with confidence. At last I summoned up courage to ask him whether it would be possible to get a passport for a person who was on the list of émigrés, a passport in due form, for a watering-place in Germany.

'Why not?'

'Well, what must we do to get it?'

'I will come and tell you to-morrow night, and you will then state the name of the person for whom it is, although I know it already.'

'Well, who is it?' I asked.

'The Princess of Taranto.'

I gave him a louis for this first visit, and he made me a bow, and gave me such a wide smile that I could not help pulling a face as I looked at him. The next day he brought me the necessary papers, but informed me that Mme. de Tarente must go with him to some workmen in her own quarter of the town, to have it witnessed, but that she might choose them herself. We were obliged to submit to the condition, and I gave him two louis for this second visit.

In a few days, he brought the passport, and asked Mme. de Tarente to accompany him to the prefecture. Although the matter was being carried out in a perfectly legal manner, we could not help feeling some trepidation. Mme. de Béarn offered to go with me and wait for Mme. de Tarente on the quay in front of the prefecture. We waited there about an hour, in real uneasiness, but at last she appeared, to our great satisfaction, with her passport quite in order, and furnished with all the signatures of the authorities, including that of M. de Talleyrand. I paid a large sum for this important service.

5

The two Polignacs were arrested. Idalie was released and obtained permission to go to see her husband in prison every day. Her cousin, Mme. de Brancas, used to accompany her. The courtyard of the Temple was always filled with people, who showed the most striking interest in the victims. They were transferred to the Conciergerie, and the crowd at the door of this prison was twice as great. Idalie and her cousin told me that every time they went the people rushed up to them to ask them whether there was any hope, and took a most touching interest in the prisoners.

For some time before their trial, the prisoners used to assemble in the same room during the daytime; guards were with them, and stood at the door. One evening, when Mme. de Polignac, her cousin, and Mme. Moreau had come, Jules de Polignac, the younger of the brothers, who was walking up and down the room, suddenly said, pointing to the guards:

'These gentlemen treated us very badly in the Temple, but since they have begun to know us better, they have relented, and I wager that if we stay two or three months together, I shall command them to do what I like.'

At his words, the guards took off their hats.

Jules was then twenty-two years of age, and exceedingly handsome.[1]

Their trial commenced, and the sittings lasted from

[1] Armand, Comte and afterwards Duc de Polignac, born 1771, died 1847, was a hussar officer when the Revolution broke out, but emigrated, served in Condé's army, and with his wife, a rich Dutchwoman from Batavia, went to Russia, received from Catherine II an estate in Ukraine, came back secretly to Paris, and took part in Pichegru's plot. Arrested with his brother Jules, and condemned to death, his sentence was commuted to imprisonment for life, but he escaped in 1813, and came back to France with the Comte d'Artois in 1814. He was one of the peers who refused to take the oath to royalty in 1830. His brother Jules, the companion of his captivity and his escape, was Ambassador in London under the Restoration, then Prime Minister, and author, in 1830, of the famous Ordonnances.

seven o'clock in the morning until four or half past in the afternoon. The answers the prisoners gave were admirable, and they declared their fidelity to their lawful sovereign with the noble courage that makes crime tremble, causing the judges to lose their heads altogether. The hall was filled with guards, to maintain order, for the people were quite won over by the courageous fidelity of the victims, and indignant at the crafty and perfidious questions of the judges, who, in spite of all their artifices, were always put in the wrong, but the emotion shown by the guards was such that they were obliged to be changed three or four times during the sitting. Georges, in particular, excited an admiration that no one could conceal. My husband, who was present at all the sittings, often came back home sobbing, and he told me one day that, while they were cross-examining Georges, his calm appearance, and simple and sublime words, had fascinated him to such an extent that he could not take his eyes off him. Georges, as he ran his eyes over the crowd, had noticed him, and my husband's emotion had struck him so much that he made him a slight bow. My husband was proud of the distinction, and could not speak calmly about it.

There was a storm of indignation when, at the last sitting, Georges, Coster Saint-Victor, Picot (Georges' servant), the Marquis de Rivière, Armand de Polignac, and twenty others, were condemned to death. All sorts of torture had been inflicted on Picot : they had applied red-hot irons to the soles of his feet, and twisted his thumbs, to make him reveal his master's address, but he had not betrayed him, and had rejected with scorn the bags of gold that were offered him. He shared Georges' prison, underwent the same trial, and told the judges, in presence of the assembly, what cruelties had been practised upon him.

Jules de Polignac was condemned to ten years' imprisonment, but, when he heard his brother's sentence, he wished to die in his place, or at any rate with him. Armand remonstrated against this fraternal devotion, and there was an argument between them so affecting that the whole audience was in tears. They clung closely to each other,

and Jules made up his mind to die, but the inflexible judges would not alter their verdict.

Poor Idalie was thunderstruck, and my husband returned from this last sitting in despair. He came into the drawing-room with such grief written on his face that we were struck by it, and he described to us, as well as he could, through his sobs, the sight that he had just witnessed. The Tourzel family were at my house, and Mme. de Sainte-Aldegonde, who is of a very demonstrative disposition, flung her arms round my husband's neck, exclaiming: 'What a good man you are!'

Mme. de Polignac saw nothing open to her but to have recourse to Mme. Buonaparte. She implored her to procure for her an opportunity of asking justice for her husband from the First Consul, and was taken early to Saint-Cloud, but when she entered Mme. Buonaparte's room, she fainted. Mme. Buonaparte showed her the utmost kindness, and stationed her in a room through which her husband would pass, telling her, and even beseeching her, to go down on her knees before him, and to address him by all the titles that he had just assumed.

Idalie agreed to everything, to save two who were dear to her, and when the First Consul appeared, she fell on her knees, and said in accents of the profoundest sorrow:

'Sire, I ask justice for my husband.'

He looked at her with surprise, and without assisting her to rise, replied:

'How can you ask for justice for him from me? He is one of those who were sent to assassinate me.'

At these words, she rose energetically to her feet:

'You do not know our Princes,' she exclaimed, 'they could not order an assassination.'

This bold reply disconcerted Buonaparte.

'Who will answer for your husband?' he asked her.

'Seven years of marriage and seven years of happiness.'

'I give you back your happiness, Madame.'

The verdict was quashed, and the two brothers were condemned to four years' imprisonment in the Château of

Ham. Nine years have passed though, and, in place of the liberty that was promised them, they are in a prison worse than the first.[1]

The life of the Marquis de Rivière was spared through his sister's intercession. He spent four years in the castle of Ham with the Polignacs, and was afterwards transferred to a prison at Strasburg where he was much less drastically treated, and he is now a prisoner on parole in that town, and enjoys a fair amount of liberty.

Mme. de Polignac now ventured to feel more hopeful, and hurried with her news to her husband and brother-in-law, afterwards sending her maid to tell me that they were saved. We were just getting up from table, and all the friends who were with me were overjoyed. I hastened to Idalie to congratulate her, and found her little room filled with people. I put my arms round her neck, and Mme. de Brancas, too, kissed me affectionately, and then flung me into the arms of her old mother-in-law, whom I had never seen, and into her husband's. Afterwards, they all exclaimed :

'Embrace this worthy man!'

and pushed me towards a man in spectacles.

'It is the lawyer, who pleaded our cause so well!'

I was so bewildered by all these effusions of feeling, that at last I began to laugh like a child.

6

Regretfully I realised that the moment of my departure was drawing very near, for I could not leave, without concern; the friends to whom I was so closely bound by circumstances and affection. I took advantage of the time that still remained to drive with them to various places in the neighbourhood of Paris, for there was always something new for me to see. I went with Mme. de Tarente, Mme. de

[1] They were only released in 1814, at the fall of Buonaparte and the Restoration of the Bourbons. (Author's note.) See also note on p. 316.

Béarn, and the Princesse de Talmont, to the Pré Saint-Gervais. This is a fairly large expanse of ground covered entirely with lilacs. The eye and the sense of smell are both gratified, for the perfume of the lilac is as sweet as the freshness of youth itself.

Afterwards we went to the Forest of Romainvilliers, which belonged to Mme. de Montesson, and while there sat down on a bench opposite to a group of peasant women. One cross old creature was scolding a girl, whose unhappy and abashed expression was a source of great amusement to a little boy standing near. A child on its knees on a table was eating fruit out of one of the baskets that the peasants carry on their backs, and it all composed a charming picture of rustic life that I added to my book of souvenirs.

A few touches from nature are more precious and more effective than any sketch drawn from the imagination, and it has been very justly said that 'Nothing is beautiful but Truth, and that which is true is alone pleasing.' Saint Theresa said 'Imagination is the fool of the family,' and no doubt it is, if we allow it liberty to wander at its own sweet will, but, if it is guided and controlled by Truth, it becomes a swift-footed steed, which carries us without fatigue into the past and the future.

The interest that I took in Idalie and her affairs was deep and sincere, and she tried to show me how much she appreciated my sympathy. The moment of my departure was drawing near, and she and my other dear friends left me as little as possible. M. de Markov went, and I knew I could only remain two or three weeks longer. One morning, when I was walking with Pauline de Béarn, she said to me :

'My dear friend, since I have known certainly that you were going, I have suffered more than I can tell you, both on account of our separation, which may be for ever, and also because of an inner disquiet that I cannot overcome. It seems to me that you only came to give us back a semblance of happiness, and that when you go, misfortunes will overwhelm us.'

Alas ! her presentiment came only too true, for she had

to bear untold sufferings, the details of which would be too long to relate here, but which were such as to endure her whole life through.

The victims were led to the scaffold in the Place de Grève. Georges, Coster Saint-Victor, Picot, and seventeen others went up to their death, shouting 'Vive le roi!' but satellites of the Emperor stood round the scaffold to prevent the people hearing and translating their feelings into action.

Moreau, being afraid to die, had written to Napoleon a letter in a manner apologising for what he had done—which weakness will be an everlasting stain on his memory. An understanding was arrived at between them, and his exile in America was the result, for it was indispensable to Buonaparte that the only man who could take his place in Paris should be out of the way.

CHAPTER XIV

1804–1805

1. Departure—On the way home—Metz, Heidelberg, Frankfurt, Marburg, Dresden. 2. Saxon Switzerland—Illness of the Princess Galitzine, mother of the authoress of the *Recollections*. 3. Her death. 4. Excursions in Bohemia—Töplitz—Prague—The Catholic convents—The Carmelites—The banks of the Elbe. 5. Mittau—The Duchesse d'Angoulême—Louis XVIII and his Court—The Abbé Edgeworth—The Comtesse de Provence.

I

I LEFT Paris on the 26 June, the day after the execution of the victims, at four o'clock in the afternoon. My friends came to bid me farewell, and I was feeling greatly depressed, both on account of my separation from all those who loved me so well, and on account of Mme. de Tarente's grief at parting from her mother.

My own mother's health was beginning to fail, and the day after we started she had an attack of nervous paralysis. My uneasiness was extreme, for it was terrible to see her in this condition, in an inn, where we had no means of procuring her quiet. But at last God had pity on me, and she began to feel better; we carried her into the carriage, and the fresh air completed her recovery.

We arrived at Metz and spent the night there, to give her a little rest. The next morning, I went round the town with Mme. de Tarente and my children. We went into a very beautiful church, and I sat down on the base of a pillar to draw it in perspective. I had hardly begun when a poor woman, all in rags, came in and knelt down before an

altar at the far end of the church. She was praying earnestly and shedding a torrent of tears. We watched her compassionately, and felt respect at her heartfelt prayers. When she had finished, my children ran up to her and offered her alms. She uttered a sort of cry, that was half a gasp, and fell on her knees to thank God with renewed vivacity and fervour.

I was pleased to see the beautiful Saverne Mountains again, as we drove through Alsatia. On our arrival at Heidelberg, I climbed up the winding path leading to an interesting Gothic castle, with Mme. de Tarente and my husband, and was much interested in a large courtyard surrounded by arcades, the walls of which were covered entirely with hatchments, which I consider a chivalric and noble ornament.

At Rastadt we went to the cemetery where the assassinated French plenipotentiaries lie.[1] Not far away is the avenue that leads to Carlsruhe, and I could not refrain from following it a little way.

We remained two days in Frankfurt, where I met with Mme. de Toutolmine, whom I was very pleased to see again. I went all over the town, although I partly knew it already, and was struck by some very lugubrious music that I heard played by students in front of a house, while a passing bell was being tolled from the steeple of the parish church. I asked, with some curiosity, what the meaning of this was, and learnt that it was the peculiar custom of the place to accompany thus the passing of a dying person.

In the principal church at Marburg there is a mausoleum erected to the memory of Elizabeth, Princess of Hungary, who

[1] In 1798, just as they were leaving the Conference at Rastadt, Roberjot, Jean de Bry and Bonnier were murderously attacked. The crime was committed by assassins in the uniform of hussars, but there has never been any doubt that they were emissaries of the Directory. (Author's note.) —The assassination occurred on 28 April 1799. Cut down with his colleagues, de Bry, however, survived and succeeded in making good his escape. The last word with regard to this outrage, which has been the subject of heated controversies, appears to have been said by Huffer in his *Der Rastadter Gesandtemord*, 1896, and the responsibility of the Directory for it is to-day disproved beyond all question.

married the Landgrave Ludovic of Thuringia. The church is full of bas-reliefs representing various events in the life of this Princess, and the mausoleum, which is in the form of a sarcophagus, is remarkable for its beautiful workmanship and the wealth of precious stones that adorn it. A yellow diamond, of a size that renders it extremely valuable, is especially noticeable. At night, it throws out a light similar to that of a candle. The body of the Princess is buried in the church, but no one knows exactly where. The mystery with regard to the whereabouts of her grave was the wish of the Landgrave, and he entrusted the secret to some monks, with whom it was buried. The monument was erected in 1235.[1]

I went to see the museum at Cassel, and found there some rather rare cameos, some bad statues, and several paintings of the Flemish school of very great value. There were Rembrandts, and Berghems, and a Paul Potter—the one that has been in the gallery of the Hermitage since the Emperor Alexander's purchase of the Malmaison collection—which particularly attracted my attention. We afterwards saw, in a large hall, portraits in wax of all the Electors. They are represented life-size, and in royal robes, and are seated in a circle. We were also shown a Catholic chapel of very great architectural beauty, built by the Landgrave Charles.

The late Duke is interred at Gotha in the garden, without a coffin, and in his shirt, by his express wish. His grave is lined with turf and hoops are placed over his body, to prevent the earth touching him. His coffin is in an adjoining temple. The eccentricity of character thus shown, the exceeding folly of the caprice, the vanity that carped at the truth it refused to recognise, combine to make one picture

[1] Saint Elizabeth of Thuringia survived her husband, who died in 1227 or 1228 in Palestine, by some years. She died on 19 November 1231, and was canonised by Pope Gregory IX, 27 May 1235, in Perugia. The place where she was buried is unknown because her remains have been removed several times, for different reasons—in the last instance, since the Reformation. The monument is believed to be of more recent date than her canonisation.

him as a juggler whose trick has failed to come off: the object he has wished to disguise is the more apparent to the eyes of the public. I am sorry, on the Duke's account: he is none the less dead and the worms have eaten him; eternity exists just the same for him; and his scanty costume will not prevent him entering into eternal life. I had the pleasure of purchasing an *Almanach* on the spot where he was born.

The garden at Weimar is charming, but the Grand Duchess Marie was away when I went through this town.[1]

The Cathedral Church at Naumburg, which from Catholic has become Lutheran, is one of the most beautiful in existence.

It was a great pleasure to me to see again the pretty walks of Leipzig. I recognised, with the most affectionate interest, the flower terrace of which I spoke before.

At Meissen I went up a tower from the top of which I had a view over the whole of Dresden. I arrived in this town feeling depressed by thoughts of Mme. de Schönburg, whose mother, Princess Poutiatine, I was about to see again for the first time since her death. The emotion I had experienced, and my apprehensions—only too well founded, alas! —with regard to my mother's health had made me very unwell. Unfortunately I fell into the hands of a doctor who gave me far too many drugs.

I disguised my feelings, however, as much as I could, and made an effort to hide my uneasiness from my mother. I went to all the places that Mme. de Schönburg had described to me so many times in her letters, and I also saw a great deal of the Princess Poutiatine, whose interest in me seemed associated with her grief for her daughter's death.

One day she asked me to go and see her alone, in the afternoon, and when I arrived she took me into her bedroom, where there was a portrait of Mme. de Schönburg, full length, and a fairly good likeness, the sight of which affected me strangely. The Princess asked me to wait for a moment,

[1] She had not yet arrived, as it was only about this time, in July of the same year, 1804, that her marriage was celebrated at St. Petersburg.

as she was going to fetch something for me, and I remained in front of the picture, gazing at it with mingled feelings of sorrow and pleasure.

Suddenly the Princess came back and covered my face with the dress that her daughter had worn the day we parted. I thought I could see her and feel her presence, for the collar of her dress still retained the smell of her hair, which she perfumed with tuberose, and the perfume and the shape of her body, which the dress still retained so unmistakably, very much upset me, and I thought I saw Mme. de Schönburg, and heard her heartrending sobs, as she said good-bye to me for ever. I was trembling from head to foot, and stood there speechless, unconscious, oblivious of everything around me and within me. The awaking was terrible. I was too unwell and too much overcome with grief to think of appearing at the Elector's court, but I went to see the much-vaunted picture gallery, in which I found some masterpieces, ruined for want of care. Raphael's Assumption is beyond all eulogy, but I did not care for Correggio's Night : I objected to the manner in which the legs and arms of the angels are all twisted up and intertwined together.

2

The doctor ordered me to take a great deal of exercise, so my husband proposed an expedition into Saxon Switzerland, and I went with him, Mme. de Tarente, and a few others. We went first to the Liebe-Thal, a charming spot, where we ate cream in a pretty mill, situated in the midst of the most pleasing and varied scenery. After we had left this spot, the scenery changed altogether, and became wild and severe ; huge rocks and narrow valleys between high wooded hills, thick branches of trees intertwined and stony paths, and springs dashing down to the valleys, made up an austere type of landscape that I greatly admired and appreciated.

The weather was magically calm ; we walked for seven hours, preceded by a guide, and climbed, on our hands and

knees, two steep mountains (the Great and the Little Wittemberg), clinging to roots and branches to save ourselves from falling. I was quite exhausted and so short of breath that my strength almost gave way, but Mme. de Tarente dragged me to the top of one of the mountains, where there is a sort of pavilion, in which we remained long enough to rest, and to admire an extensive view over the valley of the Elbe. Afterwards we went back down the mountain, through a dense, wild forest, along a path covered with stones and brambles.

Then we were overtaken by the dark. Between the interstices of the old trees the silver rays of the moon flung a doubtful light upon our path, and the sound of the woodman's hatchet echoed in the distance. I felt an extraordinary sense of enjoyment steal over me, which only the beauties of nature can arouse.

At last we arrived at the end of the forest, and perceived at our feet the roofs of a village situated on the banks of the Elbe. This fresh view was illuminated by a light which was the more striking because it was confined between the two sides of the dark forest. We seemed to be suspended in mid air, even when we had gone down three parts of the way. When we arrived at the bottom, we found a boat which took us to Pirna, where we spent the night, returning to Dresden next morning.

The valley of Tarandt is picturesque, and the ruins of a castle serve as an observatory, rising; as they do, above some of the mountains, and on the other side, looking down on valleys with scattered villages.

These excursions distracted my mind, though only temporarily, from the uneasiness I was feeling, for the pallor of my mother's face alarmed me, and though at times I ventured to hope I might yet bring her safely back to her own country, I only rejoiced in the thought for a short time, and my distress afterwards was the keener for the brief respite.

It was a pleasure to me to meet the Princess Louise of Prussia again ; she came to see me several times, and brought her brother to dine with me, the Prince Louis who perished

a few years later in the war against the French. This young Prince was almost always the victim of circumstances, and only made mistakes because he was not in his proper place. He had a noble character, but, being always frustrated and checked in whatever he wished to do, he ended by making mistakes, and his hotheadedness carried him off his balance. His ardour and his desire to distinguish himself brought about his death.

3

I am coming to the account of a very great trial, the grievous loss I experienced in my mother's death.

I had been more unwell than usual, and, being feverish, had remained in my room, and my mother had spent the whole day with me. She was strikingly pale, and at times fell into a deep reverie ; I could not take my eyes from her, and my heart trembled within me, but she left me to dine and came back in the evening. At half past ten she rose, said good-night to me, and, having kissed me with her usual tenderness, withdrew. At eleven o'clock I sent her my maid, who usually helped her to undress, and whom she liked to have about her, and I waited impatiently for her to come back and tell me whether my mother seemed inclined to sleep. My children were asleep, and Mme. de Tarente had gone to say her evening prayer in a room next to mine. I myself was in bed.

Suddenly my maid ran in, looking very much troubled, and said in a strange voice :

' Madame, your mother, the Princess, wishes you to come to her as quickly as you can.'

I began to tremble all over, and said to myself : ' My mother is dying, she is asking for me.' I jumped out of bed, put on a dressing gown, and ran to her room, but a sad spectacle met my eyes. My mother, with every sign of a paralytic stroke, was sitting across her bed, her legs bare, her white head uncovered, and her eyes distorted. She held

out her arms to me, although she was dying, and I folded her in mine. Her head fell on my breast and she blessed me in the most affectionate and solemn manner.

I will not attempt to describe my sensations, but soon I felt my strength going, and was torn from my mother's arms, to save us from falling together, and my husband led me back to my room, where for a long time I prayed aloud.

My mother expired half an hour after I had left her. She had lost her power of speech a little before, but she still had strength to lift my husband's hand and raise it to her lips. He watched by her to the end, a right which belonged to him who had been a most devoted son to her, and the support of her old age.

My mother had often expressed a desire to be buried on one of her estates in the government of Kaluga, where she had been born, and the same wish was expressed in a paper, in her own writing, which was found after her death, addressed to my husband. My husband sent to ask the Emperor's permission to carry out my mother's last desire, and His Majesty granted it with the utmost graciousness, ordering the customary prayers to be said in all the churches which the body passed.

These arrangements took up a great deal of time, and in the interval the coffin was placed in a room set apart for the purpose, near a Catholic chapel and a cemetery for foreigners. I was spared knowing when the dear remains were taken from me.

My husband on this occasion, as on many others, was my guardian angel. He took all the expenses upon himself, although properly they should have been defrayed by my brother, who inherited my mother's fortune, and who was near us at the time, at Frankfurt-on-the-Main. But my husband took a real pleasure in caring for my mother after her death, as he had done in her lifetime.

Mme. de Tarente left me neither by day nor by night, and her tender solicitude was in my eyes a supreme proof of friendship. Sorrow had banished sleep from me, and every

evening at eleven o'clock I shuddered and went through agonies that filial love alone can understand. This went on for nearly two months, and Mme. de Tarente used to sit by my bed, and not leave me until four o'clock in the morning, when exhausted nature seemed to grow benumbed, and she rose again early in the morning to go and pray near my mother's body. Her heartfelt and tender care softened the bitterness of my grief.

One thing happened about this time, which I shall never forget. I was sitting alone one morning on my divan, plunged in melancholy reflections, when my husband came in and sat down by my side. We kept silence for a time, then his eyes filled with tears and he put his arms round me, sobbing, and said: 'We are both orphaned, let us console each other.'

The winter passed sadly enough for me, for a right and lawful grief is never healed.

4

In April, Mme. de Tarente went to Vienna for a few weeks, and we agreed to go as far as Prague to meet her. I descended on foot, or in a chair carried by peasants, the beautiful mountain called the Geiersberg. These bearers live at the top of the mountain, and are accustomed to the journey, which demands unusual strength. Now and then they stopped to rest, and I took advantage of the interval to gather the climbing plants which grew on the rocks in the shade of beautiful trees. We spent two days at Töplitz.

The day after we arrived at Prague, Mme. de Tarente joined us. Prague is a picturesque town, and bears the Gothic impress. I love old towns, which seem to command our respect, and we happened, moreover, to be at Prague at the most interesting moment in the year, while the festival of St. John of Nepomuk, the patron of the town, in which he was born and in which he suffered martyrdom, was in progress. The festival lasts a week, and large numbers

of people come into the town from the surrounding country for it. A service of great pomp is held in the Cathedral, in which stands the solid silver monument which contains the body of the saint. We heard Mass from a gallery, and I was unspeakably pleased to find that I could understand the whole discourse, as the language of the country is very much like Russian. We went all about the town and on the fine bridge over the Moldau found a little sequestered chapel, dedicated to St. John of Nepomuk, in front of which there were always a number of people on their knees, while passers by respectfully bared their heads. On the whole, the Bohemians are a pious, good people.

We remained two days at Prague, during which time we visited several convents. It was the first time that I had been in a Roman Catholic convent, for those I had seen in Paris had been destroyed and only little groups of the members were left. Mme. de Tourzel had taken me to one, of Carmelite nuns, who were lodged in the building formerly occupied by men of the same Order. A number of priests had been massacred there on 2 and 3 September 1792, and the corridors were dyed with blood. After the Terror, Mme. de Jaucourt, who had been brought up in a Carmelite convent, bought the building and sent out an appeal to the sisters, who responded with alacrity. But they were not recognised by the Government, and were not allowed to wear the dress of the Order, so they chose a uniform costume, in colour, with caps and fichus of white linen. I attended vespers at the chapel of this community and, as I was very unwell, they were so kind as to get a worthy old man, the father confessor of the nuns, to pray for me.

But to return to Prague. The Archbishop's secretary undertook to act as our cicerone, and as we were going out of the town with him we met an old Carmelite whom he knew, who, after being a Lutheran, and an officer in the army of Saxony, had become a Catholic monk, and was the father confessor of the Carmelite convent. Our guide asked him to take us to the Church of the Convent and to show us, through a barred window, a Carmelite sister who had been

dead a hundred and thirty years, which he consented to do. When we had arrived in the Church, he went up to a window, about breast high, and spoke a few words in a low voice, whereupon a green curtain was drawn from the inside and we saw the dead woman sitting in an armchair, in a little square room. The only signs of decomposition on her face were a few stains, her eyes were closed, but not tightly, and her nose and mouth were perfectly preserved, while her hands, though thin, were not in the least like the hands of a corpse. The Carmelite sisters take turns to watch over her.

The one who had drawn the curtain was still holding it, and I could see her in profile. She was covered with a black crape veil which fell to her knees. She took the arms of the dead woman and lifted them with ease: they had retained all their suppleness. Afterwards, the nun resumed her seat and I said to my daughter, who was standing by me:

'The woman who is holding the curtain is as dead to the world as the other.'

I had no sooner uttered the words than I heard the rustle of a dress against the wall. The sister condemned to silence had disappeared like a shadow of the life she had renounced. This order is one of the greatest severity. The nuns speak only once a day, and may not hear the voice of strangers.

When we left Prague, we embarked at Raudnitz, on the Elbe, to return to Dresden. This is one of the prettiest journeys I have ever taken. We had three boats: one for the carriages, the second for the kitchen, and the third for ourselves, with charming rooms in it. The banks of the Elbe are exquisitely lovely, and present a succession of delightful pictures that I was sorry to leave so soon. I had a tiny room that I shared with Mme. de Tarente, and we enjoyed together the ravishingly beautiful landscape and our new existence. When meal times arrived, the kitchen boat came close up to ours.

I had very painful feelings on seeing Dresden again, the town which held such sad recollections for me, and yet, for the same reason, I regretted, a month later, being obliged

to bid it farewell, for I was returning to my own country with no pleasure in the prospect, since I did not bring my mother with me.

5

After following, as far as Mittau, the road that we had already traversed, we stopped there, and put up at an inn that was rather bad, but was the best to be had. We found awaiting us the Duchesse d'Angoulême's surgeon, who had been sent to tell Mme. de Tarente, from Her Royal Highness, that she was to go to her at once. He added that Madame had gone for a drive, but would soon be back, and that we should see her pass.

Mme. de Tarente stood on the steps with me to wait for her, and we saw her look up at all the windows and fling back her black veil when she caught sight of us. (She was in mourning for the Comtesse d'Artois.[1]) The greeting she gave Mme. de Tarente was especially sweet and she seemed much affected. Mme. de Tarente's knees seemed ready to give way under her, and she leaned heavily on my arm, as I led her to her room; then, flinging herself on her bed, she began to sob as if her heart would break.

Shortly afterwards, Madame sent for her, and this is what she told me on her return. As soon as she arrived at the castle she was taken to Madame's boudoir, the door opened, and she saw her standing in the middle of the room, holding out her arms to her. Mme. de Tarente fell on her knees before the Duchesse d'Angoulême could prevent her, and both burst out sobbing, being unable to speak. But what are words to express one's feelings at such a moment!

They had an explanation which greatly touched Mme. de Tarente. It was about a letter that Mme. de Tarente had written to Madame, when her Royal Highness was at Vienna, and the cold answer that she had received from her. Madame told her that she had been obliged to reply in this

[1] Marie Thérèse of Savoy, who died at Klagenfurth in 1805.

manner, that she had not been mistress of her actions at the time, and that, if Mme. de Tarente had suffered on receiving the letter, she had suffered quite as much herself.

The King, the Queen; and the Duchesse d'Angoulême welcomed Mme. de Tarente most feelingly, and Their Majesties expressed a wish for me to dine with them, with my husband. During the evening we received visits from the persons in attendance on the King and the Princesses; the Duc d'Havré, an estimable old man, the brother of Mme. de Tourzel, and the Abbé Edgeworth, whose very name is sufficient to inspire respect. Never have I seen any face express beauty of soul like his. He was tall, and noble-looking; and charity and apostolic dignity were written in his every movement. I watched him and listened to him, deeply moved.

When everybody had gone, I remained alone with Mme. de Tarente, talking over with her all that she had just been through.

The next day I went, as invited, to the royal residence, and found the whole family present. The Duc d'Avaray was my sponsor, and His Majesty came up to me at once and told me how much he was touched by my friendship for Mme. de Tarente, after which the King presented me to the Queen and the Duchesse d'Angoulême, who both received me very kindly. We talked until dinner. The King went in first, followed by his family, and sat between the Queen and Madame. The latter, with great dignity and courtesy, invited me to sit by her. We spoke of France and of the persons who interested her, and after dinner the King appropriated me, and we chattered and jested together. He is extraordinarily amiable, and has a really kingly manner of speaking.

The Queen wore a grotesque and ugly dress, and she has not a pleasing face, but her mind and intelligence render her attractive.

The next day I went to pay my respects to Madame, on the occasion of the birthday of His Royal Highness, and took my children with me. The Duc d'Angoulême received

us, and begged us to wait for the Duchesse, who was dressing. We had a very agreeable conversation, and Mme. de Tarente said to him, with emotion :

' How grateful I am to you, your Royal Highness, for making Madame so happy.'

' Tell me rather, Princess,' he replied, ' what I have done to deserve such a treasure.'

Madame appeared immediately afterwards, and was very gay and charming.

Two days later I left with my family for St. Petersburg, but Mme. de Tarente remained another month at Mittau.

CHAPTER XV

1805–1811

1. Return to St. Petersburg—Reappearance at Court—First interview with the Empress Elizabeth—Changes in society and in the Administration—Imitation of Buonaparte—War against him—From Austerlitz to Tilsit—A pious pilgrimage—A lady-in-waiting from the French Court on the banks of the Volga. 2. Rustic pleasures—In the Government of Nijni Novgorod—Christians and Mahometans—The fair at Makariev. 3. Birth of a daughter to Alexander I—Her death. 4. Consequences of the Treaty of Tilsit—Erfurt—The Empress Elizabeth's loneliness—The Countess von Merweldt—Entrance into society of Countess Golovine's elder daughter—The monogram—Echoes from the past—Count Rastoptchine and Prince Czartoryski. 5. Illness of Countess Tolstoy—Countess Golovine forgets her grievances to nurse her—Meeting with the Empress Elizabeth—Reconciliation—The Empress asks Countess Golovine to write her Memoirs.

I

When I arrived in St. Petersburg, I went back sadly to my own house, which had grown so much too large for me since my mother's death. My apartments were ruined. They had been let, during my absence, to Prince Louis of Würtemberg, and my bedroom, in particular, bore the marks of the Prince's carelessness. The Emperor had been to see the damage a few days before our arrival, and had been alarmed at the condition of everything, and had wished to pay for the repairs. His astonishment was great when my steward refused to accept more than 2000 roubles. The hangings of the drawing-rooms were bespattered with soap and water, and the place looked as if the Prince had had the washing done in all the rooms.

The time came for me to make my appearance at Court,

the Imperial Family being then at the Taurida Palace. I was much overcome, and obsessed by a crowd of thoughts and memories, but I did my utmost to appear calm. Countess Protassov came with me into the Empress Elizabeth's salon, and in a quarter of an hour Her Majesty appeared. I was still wearing mourning for my mother, and my costume and my feelings were in unison. The Empress greeted me with some agitation, and after kissing me, asked :

' Were you very happy in France ? '

' Yes, Madame, I found there every consolation for an afflicted heart.'

' I was extremely grieved to hear of your trouble in Dresden.'

I bowed without replying, and our conversation ended at that. Count Tolstoy, who was leaning against the door, was listening, and perhaps expected to hear us make a few remarks.

I did not see the Emperor, as ladies are never presented to him, but I paid a few visits to friends and to some of my acquaintances, and was warmly welcomed by the first-mentioned, the others seeing in me merely a person who was in disgrace at Court, but whose behaviour in France had excited admiration. I found many changes in the social and in the political world. The office of Procurator General, which had been in existence for so long, had been split up into four Ministries. This imitation of Buonaparte's system was a great trouble to the old servants of the State, because it necessarily brought in its train fresh abuses and opportunities of plunder. Under Catherine II the Procurator General had had four secretaries to assist him ; now each of the Ministers had a large number, and these men, who only received small salaries, indulged in shady speculations.

On our return to St. Petersburg, we met the Russian troops that were marching against Buonaparte. The proud, martial appearance and the fine bearing of the soldiers inspired us with confidence and hope, but the time for distinguishing themselves, as they eventually did, had not yet come. The chief events of this and the following years

are well known : the battles of Austerlitz, Eylau, and Friedland, and the Treaty of Tilsit, after the meeting on the Niemen. I will speak of these later, but I must go back for the moment to matters concerning ourselves.

Mme. de Tarente came back to us in a month's time, to my unspeakable delight, and my family shared my feelings. We resumed our quiet and uniform mode of life, and the days glided gently past, the vanities of this world neither affecting nor disturbing us. In May we all went on a visit to my husband's estates in the department of Nijni-Novgorod, and stayed a fortnight on the way at Moscow, where it was a great pleasure to me to see my sister-in-law, Princess Galitzine, again. For that matter, Moscow was the part of the country where I was born, and I could not fail to be interested in my stay there.

On leaving Moscow, we went to spend a few days on Count Rastoptchine's estate, at the castle that was afterwards so famous.[1]

But I was impatient to arrive in my possessions in the government of Kaluga, where I was to see once more the place where I had lived as a child, and find the remains of my beloved mother. As I approached my old garden, I caught sight of the church between the trees, and near it, of a monument in white stone, which had been erected opposite to the chancel and planted round with cherry trees. I ran up to it with my children, and we fell on our knees before it.

Afterwards we travelled through the government of Vladimir, a pleasant and very fertile country, and from there to Nijni-Novgorod the road is splendid. I went all over the town with Mme. de Tarente, who was eager to see and know everything, and I paused to think of the irony of fate that had caused a lady from the Court of France to be travelling along the banks of the Volga. At last we arrived at my husband's estate.[2]

[1] Voronovo, that Rastoptchine set fire to, after the occupation of Moscow by the French, that the invaders might not find quarters in it.

[2] The magnificent estate of Vorotyniets, in the government of Nijni-Novgorod.

2

We entered first a veritable corn avenue, where everything bespoke plenty and the gilded reflections of the swaying sheaves of corn produced a cheerful and smiling impression. The peasants, who were rich and happy, were delighted to see us, and Mme. de Tarente enjoyed fully, on behalf of the master, the contented happiness of the vassals. We spent here a very pleasant and restful three months, and Mme. de Tarente took quite a course in agriculture, going all over my husband's estate with him, and writing an account of her doings to her mother. We went to the famous fair at Makariev, which takes place every year at a place seven versts from one of our villages,[1] sleeping overnight at the village, which is situated on a hill overhanging the banks of the Volga, in a region covered with woods, and very picturesque. We occupied the pretty house of one of our peasants, and in the evening I saw a crowd of boats pass under our windows, some of them, markedly elongated in shape, belonging to Siberians. They anchored under our windows, and I witnessed a sight quite new to me, for the boats carried both Christians and Mahometans, who were separated from each other by a white curtain across the boat. One end of each flew the standard of the cross, and the other the crescent. Then prayers began. The Christians prayed in silence, but the Mahometans shouted 'Allah!' and indulged in gestures and contortions.

We embarked next day in a boat of our own, rowed by twelve of our peasants, wearing red shirts, which made our bark look quite festive. The site of the fair was on the right bank of the Volga, on a flat, sandy space. We might have been at a sea-port, for the river was covered with boats decked out with flags. Changes have been made since then, but at that time all the booths were spacious tents, divided

[1] The present fair of Nijni-Novgorod, transferred thither in 1817 from the village of Makariev, the name of which it retains.

into several compartments, the whole ornamented with foliage. One of these tents, much larger than the rest, was a mirrored saloon, in which were the stalls of the dressmakers and milliners, who had brought with them the refuse from the towns, and the ladies of the provinces spent all their time there, trying on dresses and hats in full view of the passers-by.

Numbers of merchants from different provinces, each in his national costume, were grouped here and there, their regular features recalling the physiognomies of ancient Greece ; they would have been fine models for an artist. There were, in particular, a number of Asiatics, and their rich merchandise was spread out in profusion, the shawls, the precious stones, and the pearls making their quaint enclosure appear very magnificent. The tents, arranged in parallel lines, are covered over with coloured sailcloth, so that you appear to be walking down a long corridor, as you pass between them.

The day after our arrival at Makariev, we were joined by Mme. Swetchine, a good and clever woman, whom we regarded as a friend, and who had brought her husband and sister with her. They stayed in the same house as we did, and we remained there ten days, and afterwards went back to our own place, where Mme. Swetchine spent three very pleasant weeks with us. She made a little expedition to Kazan with Mme. de Tarente, who enjoyed it immensely. Their way took them through an oak forest, forty versts in length.

On our way back to St. Petersburg, we made another stay at Moscow, and we ended our travels in the month of October. My house had in the meantime been done up, but, in spite of the promptness with which the work had been carried out, the furnishing had to be done after our return. Meanwhile, we occupied the first floor, and I shared Mme. de Tarente's room.

3

We were now nearing a very interesting time, for the Empress Elizabeth was in the last month of her pregnancy. I prayed God to grant her a happy delivery, and restricted

myself to that, but the public were eagerly waiting and wishing for an heir. On 2 November we were awaked out of a sound sleep by the sound of cannon, and Mme. de Tarente hurried to me, and took me in her arms, mingling her tears with mine ; in spite of our emotion, however, we counted the guns and believed that the Empress had had a son. This was a mistake, but I was none the less happy, for at any rate she had a child ! For the first time I regretted that my husband was no longer at Court, as he might have gone to ask news of her.

We spent the rest of the night, Mme. de Tarente and I, in talking over the happy event, and she shared my feelings so completely that my pleasure was doubled.

The Empress's little daughter became the object of her passionate devotion and her constant care.[1] Her retired life was a boon to her, and as soon as she was up in the morning she went to her child and did not leave her all day. If she ever happened to be spending the evening away from home, she never failed to go in and kiss her when she came in. But this happiness of hers lasted only eighteen months. The little Princess had a troublesome teething, and Frank, His Majesty's doctor, did not treat her properly. She was given tonics, which increased the irritation and she had convulsions. The entire faculty were called in, but nothing could save her.

The unhappy mother did not leave the bedside of her child, who was panting at the slightest movement. The Imperial family were assembled in the same room. Seeing her little daughter more calm, the Empress took her in her arms, feeling new hope, but as she put her face to the child's, she felt the chill of death. A deep silence reigned in the room.

She begged the Emperor to leave her alone with her child's body, and he, knowing her courage, refused her nothing. I am told that, after remaining with the child for a long time, she withdrew to the rooms of Princess Amelia,

[1] The Grand Duchess Elizabeth Alexandrovna, born 3 November 1806, died 30 April 1808,

who had shared her nursing and her grief. Emotion had injured the Princess's health, and the doctors insisted on bleeding her without delay, but she consented to anything, rather than leave her sister.

On the morning of that sad day (30 April 1808), news had been received of the death of a younger sister of the Empress, Wilhelmina, the Princess of Brunswick. The Emperor rightly thought that it was better to tell his wife at once, and that this second blow, however great it might be, would add but little to the heartrending grief of a mother.

Princess Amelia has told me that she wished at first to spend her nights with the Empress, but having noticed that the Empress choked back her sobs out of consideration for her, she thought it better to leave her to herself.

The Empress kept the body of her child with her for four days, caring for it as she had done before. Afterwards it was carried to the convent of Nevski and laid on a bier. According to custom, anyone was allowed to enter and kiss the hand of the little Princess. The Commander of Maisonneuve, at that time Master of Ceremonies, told me that he himself saw nine to ten thousand persons pass the body every day, that everyone was distressed, and that numbers of them fell on their knees, and burst into tears, declaring that the child was an angel.

The funeral passed my windows, the coffin in a carriage, in which rode Countess Litta, a lady-in-waiting, and M. Tarsoukov, Grand Master of the Court. The people wept and gave every token of grief. I cannot relate all that I felt, or how distressed I was. Mme. de Tarente was then at Mittau, and I missed her consolations greatly.

4

The battle of Austerlitz had only brought an armistice to Russia: Austria alone, in January 1806, had concluded the shameful Peace of Pressburg. Russia supported her proposals by armed force; Prussia joined her, and in October

the unfortunate battles of Jena and Auerstadt annihilated the Prussian monarchy, and flung the remnants of her army against the frontiers of Russia. The Emperor supported his ally nobly, but success did not attend his efforts, and the battle of Friedland (in June 1807) laid Russia open to the invasion of Buonaparte, at a moment when she was not prepared to sustain a war on her own territory. The Emperor thought he ought to avoid this danger and consented to an interview with Buonaparte on the Niemen, which resulted in the signing of the Treaty of Tilsit.

The period of this peace is remarkable, both from the political point of view, the discussion of which I will leave to historians, and from that of the new relations and new situations that this event produced at the Court and at St. Petersburg. Buonaparte's usurped power became more despotic every day, and seemed to paralyse the power of the legitimate sovereigns. Buonaparte required of them all that they should go to Erfurt. Count Roumiantsov, who was at that time Chancellor of Russia and all-powerful, had a theory that the alliance of Buonaparte was necessary to the maintenance of the throne and of peace, and he influenced the Emperor, whom a series of rapid and unexpected events had flung into a state of uncertainty and almost discouragement, so it was decided that His Majesty also should go to Erfurt.

This decision distressed everyone, and the Empresses vainly tried to dissuade him; even Mme. Narychkine, who at that time had great influence over him, could do nothing. He went, and his departure cast a gloom over all; but the Emperor, though hedged in by so many tribulations and difficulties, was able to recognise and hold to the new path that had been marked out for him, and as events proved, Heaven rewarded his perseverance, and crowned him with a fame that posterity will recognise with admiration.

I leave to the historian the details of these stirring times. During the absence of the Emperor, the Empress Elizabeth occupied the apartments at the Hermitage [1] and, the Empress

[1] The apartments of the Emperor and Empress were being entirely refurnished, and so, the season not permitting a longer stay in the country,

Mother having gone to Gatchina, she found herself alone in this huge palace. Her fresh quarters pleased her; she was in the middle of masterpieces of art and of a fine library, and, although very well read already in the history of Russia, she made a fresh study of the subject, from the collection of coins and medals.

She often walked in the little garden in the middle of the Hermitage, but, through want of thought, two little tombstones had been left, which seemed to be there expressly to remind her of her children. The festival of St. Elizabeth, which was likewise the name day of the Empress and of the daughter she had just lost, having come round, she went, as was her custom, to the convent of Nevski. Mme. de Tolstoy went to ask the Empress how she was, after this sad expedition, and she found her wandering in the garden, alone, and plunged in melancholy reflections. As she passed one of the little stones, Her Majesty caught sight of a cluster of pansies that were growing by the side of it, and she gathered one, placed it on the monument, and continued her walk without speaking. But her action was more expressive than words.

Nothing remarkable had happened to me during this time. My uniform and tranquil life was disturbed only by the interest that I took in the sorrows of others, and, in particular, the misfortunes of her to whom my heart is so wholly devoted.

I ought not to omit to mention my acquaintance with the Countess von Merweldt, the wife of the Austrian Ambassador. Mme. de Tarente had introduced us, and when she left for Mittau, Mme. von Merweldt cared for me like a sister. This amiable woman was particularly attached to the Empress Elizabeth and, with me, sincerely mourned the death of her child.

My elder daughter, aged nearly thirteen, came out into society about this time, and was received with the kindness that a quiet and sensible young girl can often win,

[a] the Empress resided at the Hermitage during the absence of the Emperor. (Author's note.)

while her tender and sincere affection for me preserved her from the infatuations so common to youth. She has no appearance : she is neither beautiful nor even pretty, and could rouse no dangerous passion. Sound principles have preserved her from all that could have injured her, so that I was perfectly happy about her, and did not need to impress upon her the truths that it is nearly always necessary to emphasise to the young.

My sister-in-law, Princess Galitzine, has a number of children, and a very small fortune. She was anxious for her eldest daughter to receive the monogram, because a dowry of twelve thousand roubles is attached to the distinction, and Mme. de Tolstoy, at my request, begged the Empress to intercede with the Emperor in favour of my niece. Some time later Mme. de Tolstoy told me privately that the Emperor had refused the favour, asked in the name of a mother whose five sons were in the army, and that the reason His Majesty gave for his refusal was that other mothers, with the same rights, might ask for the same thing ; but that he was thinking of giving the monogram to my daughter, to prove to my husband that the goodwill he felt for him was still the same.

I was gratified by the Emperor's remembering him, but had no wish for the monogram, which has become so common, for my daughter, and I kept Mme. de Tolstoy's secret the better because I forgot all about it.

In the meantime, my husband set out to visit his estates, a journey which lasted several months, and that he took almost every year.

On New Year's Day, 1810, I went, according to my usual custom, to embrace Mme. Pierekoussikhina, the Empress Catherine's waiting-woman, who interested me on account of her intelligence and the attachment she retained for the memory of the sovereign whose friend she had been for thirty years ; M. de Tarsoukov, her nephew, of whom I have already spoken, returned from the castle during my visit. He said to me, as he came in :

' I was on my way to your house to congratulate you on

the honour that the Emperor has just conferred upon you. The monogram—

'My niece has the monogram!' I exclaimed, with a cry of delight.

'What niece?' replied M. Tarsoukov, 'it is your daughter that I am speaking of.'

I was thinking only of my sister-in-law, and forgetting those who were present:

'Oh! dear,' I exclaimed, 'how sorry I am!'

M. de Balachov, Minister and Military Governor, in great favour just then, was in the room at the time, and he stared at me in amazement. M. Tarsoukov, alarmed at my frankness, laid great stress on the Emperor's kindness, and I grasped what he meant, and said a few words about my gratitude. Afterwards I hurried to find Mme. de Tarente, who was waiting for me at Mme. Tamara's.[1]

I was ready to cry as I told them. The news, which reached home before me, delighted my servants. The porter gave me the names of a number of people who had already found time to call and pay me the usual compliments. Since he had left the Court, this was the first sign the Emperor had given my husband that he still remembered him, and this proof that he did not forget the past was a source of great uneasiness to some.

I found my daughter as distressed as I was myself, and for the same reason, but after all we had to make up our minds to the honour, and I went to thank the Empresses. Three days later, as I was driving along the Embankment with Mme. de Tarente and my children, we met the Emperor, walking. The carriage stopped and His Majesty was kind enough to come and speak to us, so I seized the opportunity of expressing to him my gratitude for his kindness.

'I wished,' said the Emperor, 'to prove to Count Golovine that my old friendship for him is still the same. I also wished your daughter to receive the monogram alone to-day, to prove to you that I single her out from the rest.'

[1] Wife of the Russian Ambassador at Constantinople.

Count Rastoptchine arrived from Moscow and stayed at our house, and my husband returned soon after. The honour that had been conferred on our daughter pleased him very much, especially when he heard what the Emperor had said on the subject. Count Rastoptchine, who was in St. Petersburg for the first time since the death of the Emperor Paul, had it greatly at heart to have an explanation with Prince Czartoryski of all that had passed between them, for people had tried to persuade the Prince that it was Rastoptchine who had endeavoured to get him sent away, a circumstance to which I have already alluded. The Count therefore asked my husband to invite Prince Czartoryski and M. de Novossiltsov, his friend, to dinner.

I could not view with indifference the Prince's reappearance in my house as a guest, for the sight of him brought back to my memory a crowd of extraordinary events, and an embarrassment, which he could not conceal, revealed itself in his languid expression likewise. Count Rastoptchine showed him a note from the Emperor Paul, which proved plainly that it was the Empress Mother and Count Tolstoy alone who had tried to injure Prince Czartoryski; but I cannot bring myself to repeat all the vile terms made use of in this note against the Empress Elizabeth. I read it, because I was glad to see how effectually it cleared Count Rastoptchine, for it was conclusive proof that the Prince had been mistaken with regard to him. But I was far from guessing how great a service this note would render me too.

5

Shortly afterwards, the Emperor went to visit his sister, the Princess of Oldenburg, at Tver,[1] and Count Tolstoy accompanied His Majesty. While they were away,

[1] The Grand Duchess Catherine Pavlovna (born in 1788, died in 1819) had just married Prince George of Oldenburg, who was appointed Governor of Tver. When she became a widow, the Grand Duchess married again, in 1815, King William of Würtemberg.

Countess Tolstoy fell ill with gastric fever. I had not been to her house since our rupture with her husband, and only saw her if she came to me, but when she wrote me a pressing note, imploring me to go and see her, and saying that she was ill and needed me, I did not hesitate for a moment, but, allowing friendship to take precedence of every other feeling, went to her at once. Mme. de Tarente was delighted at our reconciliation, and came with me, together with my children. After this, I went to her every day. One morning, as I was sitting by her bedside, the Empress came in, and went up to her very sympathetically; she also begged me to be seated. We talked for a while of the invalid and of the doctor, and then Catiche, Countess Tolstoy's daughter, came in [1] and told Her Majesty that my younger daughter was in the next room and dying to see her. The Empress rose, and with very pretty playfulness said that she would go and pay her court to her.

Lise was quite embarrassed, for the Empress went up to her and said pleasantly: 'I have known you a long time, Lise, almost before you were born, in fact. You were born on November 22; you see, I have not forgotten,' and then moved away very quickly and left the house. She came again a few days later. I left Mme. de Tolstoy's room, to go, when she was announced, but met her in the drawing-room, and Her Majesty, coming up to me, told me that having seen a man's hat and coat in the anteroom she had thought they were mine, and that I had been using them as a disguise.

'I do not need a disguise anywhere, Madame,' I replied, 'and still less in this house.'

'Are you in such a hurry to go?'

'I am obliged to go home, Madame; it is my dinner time.'

Mme. de Tolstoy was soon much better, and left her bed. Her husband came back and pretended to be delighted to see me, so I acted as if I believed him, and went on as I

[1] Catherine, married to Prince Constantine Lubomirski, a Pole, and a Lieutenant-General in the Russian army.

had been doing, for, after all, I went to see his wife, not him. I met the Empress again later, at Mme. de Tolstoy's, when she had been convalescent for some time. Her Majesty arrived there with the Duchess of Würtemberg,[1] and my daughters and Mme. de Tarente withdrew into the dressing-room. I remained with the Empress, who seemed to feel kindly towards me, and the conversation was animated, and lasted until three o'clock. Then I rose to go, and went to fetch Mme. de Tarente out of her retreat. She had left her hat in the room where the Empress was, and we sent Catiche in to fetch it. The Empress, when she saw her, took the hat herself and brought it to Mme. de Tarente, seeming pleased to see me again. I lay stress on these details, which seem insignificant in themselves, because they prepare the way for the dénouement that shortly ensued.

When Mme. de Tolstoy had quite recovered, my meetings with the Empress ceased, and for several months nothing remarkable happened; then one morning Mme. de Tolstoy wrote and asked me to come to her house at six o'clock. She received me in her boudoir, which was brilliantly lighted up and perfumed, and looked quite festive; I heard a carriage, and Mme. de Tolstoy said: 'It is the Empress.' Then, without knowing why, I felt agitated.

The Empress likewise appeared to be a little upset. She came towards me eagerly, spoke to me of my husband's health, and then made us both sit down. Her eyes, full of kindness to me, made countless memories surge up in my mind, and our conversation was very pleasant, but in half an hour I rose to go. The Countess told me afterwards that when I had gone the Empress remained for a time plunged in thought and said to her:

'Dear me, how strong an early friendship is!'

At Christmas, Mme. de Tolstoy gave a supper to the children from the Jesuit boarding school, amongst whom were her two sons, and the Empress expressed a wish to be present, as also the Duchess of Würtemberg. At six

[1] Antoinette, wife of the Duke of Würtemberg, who was serving in the Russian army.

o'clock we presented ourselves at Mme. de Tolstoy's and Her Majesty arrived. After having spoken to her hostess, to Mme. de Tarente, and to Countess Wittgenstein, the Empress sat down and asked me to go near to her. I sat down at a little distance, but she repeated, in an authoritative tone, ' Nearer, by my side.'

I obeyed, then she said to me :

' How happy I feel to have you with me ! '

I was bewildered at the change in her, and could not understand what had brought it about, and the evening passed in such a manner as to increase my surprise. But, after a time, I learnt that the Empress had had shown to her the note from the Emperor Paul, which I have already mentioned. Count Rastoptchine had gone back to Moscow, but Prince Czartoryski had spoken about it to Countess Stroganov, and the latter to the Empress, and Her Majesty having expressed a wish to read it, the Count had been written to, and without hesitation had sent it to her.

Indignant at its contents, the Empress threw it into the fire, but she knew at last who were the real authors of her troubles and how unjust she had been in thinking me guilty, and from that time she had tried to revive the old friendship between us, but it was natural that I should be surprised at her behaviour, not knowing its motive. Could I possibly have guessed that such accusations had been levelled at me, I who thought I had given proof enough of unalterable fidelity and attachment ?

My daughter had trouble with her eyes, tumours came on her eyelids, and she had to submit to a rather painful operation. The Empress was kind enough to take an interest in this operation and sent her a rose by Mme. de Tolstoy. When my daughter was better, we went to see Mme. de Tolstoy, and the Empress arrived too. She spoke very kindly of what my daughter had had to endure, and afterwards I offered her a ring with a moonstone in it, which is said to be lucky. She put it on her finger and, a moment later, said to Mme. de Tolstoy :

' You have made some changes in your rooms. Stay here

on your couch, and I will go and look at them,' then turned and looked at me in such a manner that I understood she wished me to follow her. At last I found myself alone with her, in Mme. de Tolstoy's little boudoir. How long a time it was since such a thing had happened! We talked by fits and starts, and were both much overcome. The Empress told me how uneasy she felt about Mme. de Tolstoy's health, and I added that it was a still greater trouble to me to see her in such a condition, because it was only through her that I could hear any news of Her Majesty. The Empress looked distressed, and said:

'I can never find words to express how touched I am at the constant attachment to me that you have always shown. Your fidelity fills me with gratitude.'

She went on speaking kindly and affectionately, and I kissed her hands over and over again, bathing them with my tears.

After this explanation, I often saw her, sometimes at her sister, Princess Amelia's, sometimes at Mme. de Tolstoy's. She commanded me to go with Mme. de Tarente to the Princess's, sometimes in the morning, sometimes in the evening, and we all used to talk together for a time, and then she would take me into another room, so that she might speak more freely and confidentially. This was all she could do for me, for I had not private access to Her Majesty, and I gratefully enjoyed what her kindness offered.

It would be impossible for me to repeat all our conversations, but the new ideas the Empress gave utterance to, the charm of her expressions, and her sweet and winning character made them very pleasant. During the summer, I saw her twice a week at Countess Tolstoy's country-house, where she was kind enough to come and spend the evening with us, and when we went back to town, we went again to Princess Amelia's.

One day the Empress said to me:

'You really must consent to what I am going to ask you. Write Memoirs. No one is better able to do so than you, and I promise to help you and to supply materials.'

I raised a few difficulties, which were smoothed away, and I had to consent to undertake a task of which I did not feel myself capable, and on the morrow set to work. A few days later I took the beginning of my ' Recollections ' to the Empress, and she seemed satisfied, and ordered me to go on.

CHAPTER XVI

1812–1814

1. Count Golovine re-enters the Emperor's service, 1812—The Emperor leaves for the army—The Empress's courage—Excessive frankness of Count Golovine—Popularity of the Empress—Good news from abroad and private sorrows. 2. The Allies march on Paris—Russian thoughts of vengeance—Proclamation of Louis XVIII—Melancholy joy of the Princess of Taranto—Her reappearance at the Russian Court—The esteem shown her—Her illness and death. 3. Grief felt and shared—Higher duties—Departure of the body for France.

I

THE next year my husband re-entered the Emperor's service, and was appointed Grand Cupbearer. The Emperor was most kind to my husband, in making the appointment, and, when speaking about the matter to the Empress (who repeated to me what he had said), expressed himself in a manner most flattering to my husband, all of which rejoiced me very much. A few days later, also, I met the Emperor out walking, and he then spoke very warmly about my husband, and said what a pleasure it was to have him near him once more, and alluded once again to old times. But this change in my husband's affairs brought none for me, and did not facilitate meetings with the Empress. Mme. de Tarente was very distressed, but I was in a manner glad to be able to prove to the Empress how free my attachment to her was from any personal feeling of self-seeking.

The Emperor left St. Petersburg to join the army. The French were advancing with great strides, and their

first successes caused us well-founded anxiety, but on this conspicuous occasion the Empress showed admirable courage and confidence in the ultimate issue, and her noble example revived the courage of many whose hearts had been failing them, so that they dared with her to look ahead to the glory that was to follow the temporary gloom.

I will not enter here into the details of this very recent and well-known war, but will continue to speak of what more particularly concerns us. The Emperor's first journey was not a long one, but in December of the same year he went again and took a glorious share in the successes of his troops.

The Empress spent the summer of the following year at Tsarskoie-Sielo.

Our interviews up to this time had gone on in the same manner, but now her residence was too far away for me to be able to go to meet her. She did me, however, the honour of writing to me several times.[1] My husband was sent on a special errand to Moscow by the Emperor, to distribute the help that the town just then so urgently required, and on taking leave of the Empress he had a conversation with her in which his zeal carried him perhaps a little too far, and he allowed himself to say more than he ought to have done, with the result that they parted rather coolly. He wrote me a letter full of his regrets, and the Empress was kind enough to speak of the matter to me, too, and in her indulgent kindness subsequently forgot all that must have wounded her at the time.

In December the Empress received a letter from the Emperor, suggesting that she should join him and then go on to visit her mother, the Margravine of Baden. The day before she left, the Empress was so kind as to come to Countess Tolstoy's to say goodbye to us. I had an interview of an hour with her and ventured to speak to her with my usual frankness. We took her to her carriage, and the next day

[1] Some of her letters will be copied later on. (Author's note.)—We have not been able to find these copies in the MS., in which there are a number of blank pages. (Editor.)

attended service at the Kazan Church, where she went to hear a *Te Deum* before starting. The crowd was extraordinary, and the love the people felt for her was written in every face. They crowded round her, and when she was in her carriage, some of them, as the usage was, offered her bread and salt.

Her departure took place on 19 December 1813. The cold was intense, and the absence of the Emperor and Empress made the Capital very dismal. However, while we were grumbling at our loneliness and a few restless spirits were daring to complain, the Emperor was preparing the salvation of Europe. Alone among all the Allies, he was conscious of pure intentions and in carrying them into effect manifested a firmness worthy of him.[1]

To return to my private affairs, my husband had a violent relapse of jaundice, and was obliged to submit to a long and troublesome cure. We spent our time in his apartments, and the good news that we were constantly receiving was a distraction from the dull monotony of our existence. The faithful heart of Mme. de Tarente was beating with hope, for it was known that Louis XVIII had left England and that he was returning to France, that the Emperor Alexander was making a victorious advance towards Paris, and that the usurper had fled to Fontainebleau with his satellites.

I am now approaching a moment of terrible import to me, that will affect my whole future life.

2

The cause of the Bourbons had always been dear to me, on account both of my own principles, and of the friendship that bound me to Mme. de Tarente, for our hearts and minds were in such sympathy that we shared every feeling. The moment so longed for by her was on the point of arriving, the cry of *Vive le Roi !*—so deeply graven on the heart of my incomparable friend—was about to make itself heard !

[1] All this will explain the letter from the Empress dated 14/26 July, which will be quoted further on.

Everyone knew that the Emperor Alexander was only a day's march from Paris, and desire for vengeance, that feeling unfortunately so familiar to men, was in every heart. The disasters of Moscow had roused every evil passion, and people thought it would be quite a simple matter to burn Paris, take possession of the treasures there, and prepare, against the King's return, nothing but a heap of cinders. Those who judged thus had forgotten to take into account the mercy of God and the magnanimity of Alexander.

All the arguments and discussions that I heard on the subject vexed me very much, and I suffered doubly when tactless persons indulged in them in the presence of Mme. de Tarente, who, between hopes and fears, was hardly more than half alive.

One morning she proposed to my younger girl a drive out to our country-house, which was twenty-four miles from the town. This place is in part her own creation, for she shared all our pleasure and interest in it, and, for her own part, used to grow plants in her window in March to transplant in the island, which I had formally made over to her. During her absence news was brought to my husband that our victorious troops were at Montmartre, that Paris had surrendered, and that a peaceful entry had been made into the city and Louis XVIII proclaimed King, which news roused great delight in my husband's drawing-room. We had a great many people there, and each one, after the first moment of delighted surprise, thought only of how happy Mme. de Tarente would be. I cannot express what my own feelings were. I stood by the window that I might see her arrive, and my heart beat so violently that I could hardly get my breath. My husband sent my elder daughter into our friend's rooms to wait for her there, and to prepare her for the good news. As her carriage stopped at the door, however, she saw our steward who was waving his handkerchief and was surrounded by a number of servants, all waiting impatiently to offer her their congratulations. Lise told me afterwards that when Mme. de Tarente saw these demonstrations of delight, she uttered one sharp cry, grew

alarmingly pale, buried her face in her hands, and murmured faintly :

' It is some good news.'

She said no more, being unable to speak. My daughter brought her into my husband's drawing-room, and I threw my arms round her, so did my husband, while everyone else crowded round her, powerfully moved. She was trembling and had no strength left, so we made her sit down, and she had all the trouble in the world to get her breath. After that day she was always pale, and her noble countenance assumed an expression of melancholy joy. I could not leave her a moment, for terrifying presentiments filled my heart, and I felt in myself an indefinable void.

We loved each other more than ever, and more than ever felt the need of living for each other, but the faithful heart of Mme. de Tarente, which had so nobly borne appalling misfortunes, could not stand joy. All her physical faculties gave way under the strain of an emotion to which she was a stranger.

Shortly afterwards we heard from our friends in France. The King and Madame wished Mme. de Tarente to go to them, and she, more devoted to her duty than to her own life, proposed to start in the autumn, as she wished to see the Emperor before she went, and thank him for the hospitality that she had met with in his Empire. One morning, in my dressing-room, where we usually had breakfast, she said to me, after long and deep thought :

' Happiness is not for me. God has just accomplished the desire of my heart ; the King is on the throne of his ancestors, and I must go ; I must leave certainty for uncertainty. To leave you and this hospitable house, in which, thanks to you all, I have enjoyed a pure and quiet life, is death to me. In my own country, there will be a thousand and one things to distress me ; it is not everyone who shares the disinterestedness of my feelings for my sovereigns, and I shall have terrible opinions to combat, and some very painful duties to fulfil.'

I gazed at her without speaking, but each word she spoke

was like a knife in my heart; my eyes, which were filled with tears, did not dare to meet her own.

About this time she received a most charming letter from the Empress Elizabeth, about the changes that had been effected in France, and I received one too, on her arrival at Bruchsal.

My children and I were already bemoaning our approaching separation from Mme. de Tarente. The Empress Dowager, who had, from the beginning, sympathised very sincerely with the King's cause, wrote Mme. de Tarente an exceedingly kind note, asking her to go and see her in the morning. She did so the next day, and the Empress made much of her, and invited her to go back to dinner.

The appearance of Mme. de Tarente at Court made a great sensation, for she had not been since our Alliance with the usurper, preferring to renounce all Imperial favour and even to give up the pension that our sovereigns had granted her, rather than be false for a moment to her principles. She withdrew without saying anything, but her silence was understood.

Suddenly she was attacked by an affection of the eyes that kept her at home. On 7 May, Ascension Day, she went to church, but felt so ill there that on her return home she went to bed. I was appalled at her appearance, but she reassured me, saying that it would be nothing, and that her illness would pass off. She went upstairs as usual for dinner and sat at table, but was unable to eat anything.

She continued for some time to go with us down to my husband's rooms. On the 17th, Whitsunday, she felt worse, but, instead of going to bed, desired to attend the dinner at the Court, to which she had been invited, so that she might take Lise to the promenade in the garden. She coughed from time to time, and seemed to be quite overcome, but she fought against her sufferings with so much courage that, in spite of our uneasiness, she was able, between times, to reassure us.

On the 27th, when she was sitting in the midst of us, a cold perspiration broke out on her forehead, and she leaned

her head on her hands, unable to hold herself up any more. There were in the room, besides ourselves, Mme. Tamara, who was much attached to her, and Mlle. de Buissy, an excellent young woman, in attendance on the Duchess of Würtemberg. I begged Mme. de Tarente to go to bed, and she consented, for she could do nothing else, and the next day we sent for the doctor.

Although it was almost certain that there was some local trouble, as she suffered very much from a stitch in her side, it was decided to apply a blister. Other symptoms manifested themselves, and another was applied between her shoulders. I changed the applications, with trembling hands, and suffered from all she endured, but we would neither of us have allowed another hand than mine to touch her. I washed her, and rubbed her side, and did everything for her.

An unexampled complication of ills developed daily, and her sufferings were beyond anything than can be imagined, but her adorable patience seemed to be doubled, and when I said to her: 'Good Heavens! what you must be suffering!' she replied:

'Anyone who is surrounded by such friends and comforts as I am has no right to complain.'

A paper written by my daughter, after the death of Mme. de Tarente, and which I intend to add to my 'Recollections,'[1] gives the details of her Christian and most admirable end. I will not speak of what I suffered in this terrible misfortune, which proved to me that we have within us an unknown fund of strength that our everyday weakness prevents our recognising. The continual fear of losing what we love does not permit us to realise or admit our powers of resistance.

My husband, who was still suffering very much from his jaundice, remained in the drawing-room where our friends met daily, to mourn and sympathise with us. Now and again I left my incomparable friend for a few moments, to encourage and cheer my husband, whose

[1] According to the Russian Editor of these *Recollections*, the paper written by Mlle. Golovine was preserved in a Jesuit convent.

grief pierced me to the heart. The Duchess of Würtemberg was an angel of consolation to me during this terrible time, and came nearly every day. She was at our house an hour before the death of Mme. de Tarente, and I shall never forget her tears, and her words to me.

The last morning of Mme. de Tarente's life, while the Duchess was still with me, I heard her utter a frightful cry, and ran to her.

At dinner time I agreed to tear myself away from her, to calm my husband, who was earnestly asking for me; but before leaving the room, I went up to her once more. She was actually dying; I felt her pulse, but could no longer feel it beat, still she took my hand with extraordinary vivacity.

'Tell me that you are well: tell me that you are not suffering!'

'I am well,' I replied, 'might you only be as I am.'

'There is life there still,' she said, 'but it won't be long now.'

Dr. Craighton had managed, I do not know how, to persuade my husband that she would live yet, and that she ought to have chicken broth. My husband did not go into the invalid's room, and not seeing the agonies she was suffering, he did not realise that she was dying. I sat down at table, in despair. A maid came in and fetched my daughter, and I was about to follow, but my husband begged me to stay, telling me what Craighton had said. I was in torment, but resignation commanded me to submit. At last, unable any longer to resist my cruel anguish, I fled. She was no more.

3

We all seemed to have lost our strength and were bowed down by our common sorrow. The constant care of nursing the beloved one, and endeavouring to alleviate her sufferings, had given us a sustaining activity, but when the object of

so much tender care disappeared from our eyes, we seemed, as it were, annihilated. We had performed the most menial offices for her, and she had required our attentions at every moment. I remember, five days before she died, I was sitting alone by her bed when Craighton came in. He had come from Pavlovsk, and said to Mme. de Tarente, after feeling her pulse, that the Empress Dowager had told him to give her the kindest messages, and to ask her whether she would like any fruit.

'Thank Her Majesty,' she replied, 'but I do not require anything.'

Then, raising herself with a sort of vigour on her weakened arms:

'But, especially, tell the Empress, that she has never had friends like mine.'

Every one of her words will always remain graven on my heart.

The Duchesse de Châtillon, her mother, who died two years before her, had expressed a wish for her beloved daughter to be one day buried by her side, in a Chapel at her Castle of Wideville, twenty-four miles from Paris, and the monument to the Duchesse de la Vallière, Mme. de Tarente's grandmother, had been erected there by her orders. My first desire after the melancholy event was to transport the body of my lamented friend to its family resting-place. It was necessary to open the body and embalm it, and my daughter's paper will be found to give the explanation of the sufferings which she endured so long, and which caused her death.

In a week's time the body was taken into the crypt of the church. This was at midnight, and the whole household followed the convoy. After Father Rosaven had said the customary prayers, our servants raised the coffin, and carried it into the church. I followed on foot, with my husband, my children, and our friends. I would have given my life to follow her to her last resting-place. Two days later, the funeral ceremony was performed in the church with all due state, and a week after the body was taken to

Cronstadt, to be put on board. I spent the summer at Kamiennyï-Ostrov, not having the courage to stay at the house where we had been so happy together.

I should like to add further that the day after I had the terrible misfortune of losing my friend, Mme. de Tarente, as I was about to rise from the divan on which I had spent the night, I sat down to try to collect my thoughts. I was saying to myself: 'God, I prayed for her while she was alive, during her sufferings; how shall I pray now?'

My younger daughter was just then looking through Mme. de Tarente's Book of Prayers, and she said suddenly, as if replying to my thought:

'Mamma, here is a beautiful prayer for you, just now.'

I was struck by this strange coincidence and was confirmed in the consoling conviction that the soul of my friend was present with us.

CHAPTER XVII

1814–1817

1. A sad summer—The house at Kamiennyï-Ostrov—The Emperor's return—Presentation at Court of the younger Mlle. Golovine—A letter from the Empress Elizabeth—A changed existence—Irreparable void. 2. The Congress of Vienna—The Hundred Days—Fine rôle of the Emperor Alexander—Fêtes at St. Petersburg—Unforeseen coldness of the Emperor and Empress to Countess Golovine—The friends of France—The Baronne de Beaumont—The Empress's generosity—Mysterious reason for her attitude towards Countess Golovine—She is interested in the *Recollections* of the Countess. 3. Expulsion of the Jesuits—The victims of the Revolution: Princess Lubomirska and her daughter—Illness and withdrawal from court of Count Tolstoy—'A gleam of reconciliation' with the Empress—Count Golovine enters the Council of Empire. 4. Further meetings with the Empress—Persistent enigma.

I

THE house that I occupied at Kamiennyï-Ostrov was on a road along which there was a constant stream of traffic, and I had windows so small and so low that, even against my wish, I missed nothing of this magic lantern entertainment. Such a distraction was in too sharp contrast with my sufferings, and was in many ways very distressing. The view from the windows and from the balcony was beautiful, and in the evening I used to hear horns in the distance. Although this music was not in any way connected with my memories, I was saddened by it, for a sweet harmony has the power of reviving in us a sensibility which carries us back to all that affects and moves our hearts.

I received a number of tiring visits, and my husband

insisted on my presenting my youngest daughter at Court. The Empress having returned for a time, the Peterhof fête was to take place as usual and I had to take my daughter to it. It was just a month after the death of Mme. de Tarente, but I gave way on this, as on several other occasions, and went to the Court with a harrowed heart.

The Empress Dowager was most kind; she had shown great sympathy with me at the time of my trouble, and had sent every day to ask how I was. I hardly saw the crowd around me, for when one is overwhelmed by a great sorrow, it is only with the eyes of the heart that one sees. The Emperor spoke to me in the ordinary language of polite condolence, and all those whom I met for the first time hastened to utter the usual commonplaces, which are so unconsoling. What I have lost is irreparable, and I deem myself happy if I sometimes encounter some slight resemblance to what my heart is constantly seeking.

The Duchess of Würtemberg was also staying at Kamiennyï-Ostrov. I often saw her, which was my only pleasure in this sad spot.

About this time I received this letter from Her Majesty, the Empress.

BRUCHSAL, this 14/26 *July* 1814.

'Why can I not give to my words all the force of my feelings, my poor friend! You would find in my heart the sincerest sympathy that anyone could possibly feel for your grief. It is only to-day that I have heard of the irreparable loss that you have sustained; the loss that all have suffered, who know how to appreciate merit. I personally, what do I not owe her for the affection that she felt for me! I enclose with this a ring that I had chosen for her, and which I was waiting for an opportunity of sending her; wear it yourself instead, with this in mind, promise me that you will. How much you must have suffered! And what a void you must be feeling now! I feel it very cruel that I am so far from you and, if I could allow myself to murmur against what is the will of God, I should lament that He sends to those who

are dear to me their heaviest trials just when I am far from them and cannot offer them my help and sympathy. It seems as though God thought her long ago fit to take to Himself, but wished to let her yet enjoy in this world the greatest happiness of all, the only one that she was capable of taking pleasure in. She is happy; she has finished her hard task. Perhaps she is united with all those she mourned here, but you, my poor friend, how much you are to be pitied! Take care of your health. I do not need to say so to you, though, for you will never forget the duties that still bind you to this life. God only knows when and how I shall see you again. Three weeks ago I thought I should be in St. Petersburg next month, but the Emperor, on arriving here, decided otherwise. He thinks proper that I should wait for him here, join him in six weeks' time in Vienna, and there remain with him during the Congress. This consideration and his wish have decided me, but it has not been without regret. I feel anxious, and unspeakably impatient, to return to Russia, and I feel that I shall not rest until I am there. This is a trial of another kind for me. God sometimes turns what seems a most desirable position into a severe trial. I am more convinced than ever that there is no happiness and no repose but in the other life! I am speaking to you of myself, but I do not apologise. I am too convinced of your friendship not to know that, even in the midst of your own sorrow, you will sympathise with me. There is no friend like you, and it is sweet to be able to depend on such affection. I know how much your husband has suffered, and I know what Pache has done. May God preserve these dear ones to you, and you will yet be happy in this life. Tell them all the sympathy I feel for them and you. Write to me; it is not, I hope, an indiscretion to ask you to do so. Pour out all your troubles into my bosom, for I can feel for you. Speak to me about her whom you have just lost, and tell me all the details of her last moments. I feel a real need to know them.

'Goodbye, my poor, poor friend. May God sustain you!'

This letter filled me with gratitude and emotion. My deep attachment to the Empress was the only one which, at this time, could relieve the heaviness of my heart.

My life had changed its character. The sure and faithful friend was no more. I had to devote myself henceforward entirely to others, and I had no longer the friendship that ceaselessly upheld me to rely on. The tender affections that remain to me demand the entire sacrifice of myself, and this I submit to without complaint, for when God takes from us the object of our dearest affections, He draws us more closely to Himself.

Some calculating persons have said to me: 'With children like yours, you will find consolation!' But the children whom I love and cherish I had when my friend was still alive. I had, as it were, a necklace of precious stones, which was the foundation of my fortune, and the most beautiful stone in it is lost and cannot be replaced; the necklace is spoilt. One must feel to know, and one cannot judge of the feelings of others by one's own.

When I went back to my town house, I experienced a multitude of sensations that it would be difficult for me to put into words. The room in which Mme. de Tarente died is dearer to me than any treasure. I sleep next to it, and I often fancy I hear her groans.

At about the same time, Aglaé Davidov,[1] née de Gramont, came to St. Petersburg. Mme. de Tarente had felt a real affection for this young matron; her misfortunes, her youth, and the dangers to which she was exposed demanded some sustaining help, and this my lamented friend had undertaken to give her. Aglaé's gratitude and attachment to her roused my interest in her, and the confidences she made me obliged me to try to be of use to her. I venture to think that I was the means of preserving her from some

[1] Aglaé Angélique Gabrielle (1787–1847), daughter of the Comte de Gramont, the companion of Louis XVIII during his exile in Russia, married to a Colonel in the Regiment of Knights' Guardsmen, Alexander Lvovitch Davydov. She was married again in 1835 to Marshal Count Sebastiani.

dangers. But the void I felt, and feel still, will always be the same.

2

Political events, even though important and far-reaching, were only of subsidiary interest to me. Everything had lost its value in my eyes, since I no longer had anyone with whom I could share my thoughts. I was only happy when, alone with God, I called upon the soul of Mme. de Tarente, and begged her to pray for me.

The Congress of Vienna, which was only to have lasted six weeks, stretched itself out to nine months. The tediousness of the political operations discouraged some people, and the Emperor's glory was somewhat dimmed in their eyes.

The Empress remained in Vienna during the whole of the fêtes, and afterwards went back to her mother.

The appearance of Buonaparte in France deepened the general dejection. The rebellious troop, that circumstances had for a moment fettered, had reappeared. But the Emperor Alexander, assisted this time by England, and destined by Providence to be the protector of a lawful cause, triumphed over his attempts and succeeded in ensuring the second entry of the King of France into his dominions.

Louis XVIII was not enthusiastically welcomed, and his royal crown became more than ever a crown of thorns, for the Allies were proposing to divide his States. The Emperor Alexander was here once again the protector of the rightful cause.

The time for the return of the Emperor and Empress was approaching. They arrived in December, and the Court became very brilliant. The Prince of Orange arrived in St. Petersburg shortly after Their Majesties, and the marriage of the two Grand Duchesses was an opportunity for many entertainments. After the letter I had received from the Empress Elizabeth, and which I have quoted, I felt myself justified in entertaining some hopes. I saw her

in Society and at the Castle, but her embarrassment with me, and the coldness of the Emperor, disabused me and showed me that I was destined to endure fresh trials.

I resigned myself with more courage than I should have been able to summon before my sorrow, for a great trouble destroys one's illusions. My unalterable devotion to the Empress rose superior to everything, but though my heart suffered, I felt no wound to my self-esteem.

I often received letters from my friends in Paris, whose affection for me seemed to have increased since the death of Mme. de Tarente. The Baronne de Beaumont, her old friend, a poor but virtuous woman, had lived all this time on a pension allowed her by Mme. de Tarente, but which she fancied she owed to the kindness of the Empress. The delicacy of feeling which made her hide her own beneficence had induced her to let her gift assume this form, because, but for the kindness of the Empress, she would not have been in a position to help her friend, for she had received a secret pension of 5000 roubles from Her Majesty. When she died, I resolved to ask, for the Baronne, the continuation of the pension, and I made up my mind to speak to the Empress about it; so, as I was unable to see her privately, I ventured to address my request to her at a ball given by the Empress Dowager. I reflected that one must not think of oneself when one wishes to be of service to others, and must not be discouraged by obstacles that could be overcome by zeal and perseverance. I counted also greatly on the Empress's love of doing good and on her affection for the memory of Mme. de Tarente. My plan was successful, and she ordered me to send her a line about the matter by my husband. I received the money without delay, the very next day, together with a note which ran as follows:

'I am sending Count Golovine one year's instalment of the pension that I shall be pleased to continue to Mme. de Beaumont. I am sending the sum to him, because I have to send him another amount at the same time. I am sorry not to have the opportunity of a talk with you, for I have a thousand and one questions to ask you. However, *for the*

present, it is impossible. We must wait. Time works great changes. Might I ask you how your historical work is progressing? Since the trouble you have been through, I can quite understand that you have not been working at it, but I am also sure that you have not forgotten it, and I should very much like to see it again, if possible. In my loneliness, every intellectual occupation is good for me, and this would be a recreation. So one day, when you can do so without too much trouble, collect all the loose papers, and send them to me *if you can,* but if it is impossible, tell me so, and I shall not mind at all.'

This is what I replied to Her Majesty's note.

'The boon you have just granted to Mme. de Beaumont overwhelms me with gratitude. Everything that has any connection with the memory of Mme. de Tarente specially affects me. You are alleviating the sorrows of a very suffering creature, you are giving life to one who has lost all hope of living. I feel your kindness as much as she will, especially since it is to you, Madame, that we are so happy as to owe it. With regard to the 'Historical Recollections,' I cannot possibly send my scribbles to Your Majesty. It is quite imperative that they should be copied out, and I have no longer the eyesight to do it, for, since my terrible sorrow, I have three parts lost my sight, and can only write in the daytime with the help of spectacles. In the evening, even these are no relief to me. If you will trust my daughter, for whom I can answer as I would for myself, I will give it into her care. Mme. de Tarente had copied out what we wrote up to the time of the death of the Emperor Paul, which is where Your Majesty stopped short. I have continued from that point everything that personally concerned myself, adding that, finding myself separated from Your Majesty, my story and yours were no longer one, and that I was deferring the historical details until such time as, having returned from my travels, and become reconciled to you, I should hear the exact truth. I have written the account of my travels and have stopped short at my mother's death during my stay in Dresden. I have not continued

them further, for the illness and sufferings of my lamented friend have engaged my thoughts entirely. I will venture to confess to Your Majesty that her death, and my grief, are as fresh in my mind as they were at the time. I will resume the work, if Your Majesty wishes to go on with it, and you will see from what I have said where you will need to begin. I will send you by my husband, if you wish, the fragments that you have been kind enough to entrust to me.

'Believe me, Madame, I shall always respectfully submit to the circumstances that govern Your Majesty's actions. My fate is to be misunderstood, but my conscience is too pure for me to try to justify myself. Deign to believe that, whatever may happen, my respectful devotion and fidelity will always be the same. I rejoice, and I thank God, that I am attached to you for your own sake, not as one loves in this sad world.

'I present to you my most respectful homage.'

I saw the Empress at a large ball after writing this note to her, and she told me to leave my papers as they were, but I have gone on with my 'Recollections' for myself.

3

Shortly after Their Majesties' return, the Jesuits were expelled from St. Petersburg. This rigorous measure was provoked by the fear of conversions to the Catholic religion. They were suspected of having tried to influence a large number of persons, and especially society women, and the Emperor was forced to act accordingly. The event entailed circumstances that were very painful to several families, and it is to this same reason that I think I must attribute the Emperor's even more marked coldness towards myself. I can only explain by his kind feeling for my husband some attentions that he condescended to pay my children and me.

In the spring, Catiche Lubomirska informed me of the arrival of the Countess Rzewuska, my husband's first cousin.

I had known her by reputation for a long time, and felt a special regard for her. The springtime of her life had been spent in prison; she was born in France and had remained there with her mother, who was one of the victims of the revolutionary barbarity, and perished after some months' captivity.[1] Her daughter, aged seven, was left alone, at the mercy of the prison gaoler, who ill-treated her and almost refused her dry bread, the only food she had. Prince Lubomirski, Rosalie's father, was in the service of France, but was away just then and unaware of his little girl's fate. He heard of it at last and sent for her, and the person he commissioned to fetch her arrived three days only before the date on which Rosalie was to have been sent to the Foundling Hospital. She would have been lost beyond recall.

This extraordinary opening to her life seems to have been only a preparation for every virtue, and her mind is the flower of her soul. I made the acquaintance of Mme. Rzewuska, whom Catiche brought to see me on 15 May (1816), two days after her arrival at St. Petersburg. My friendship with Mme. de Tarente had interested her for some time, and the story of her death touched her deeply, on account of the extraordinary sympathy between their two souls and the close resemblance that existed between their characters and principles. The resemblance struck me very forcibly and was a little comfort to me. My acquaintance with her greatly influenced my life, and, when speaking of myself, I must speak of her.

The Emperor had not taken Count Tolstoy with him, for his health had become affected, and he would not have been able to stand His Majesty's rapid travelling. It is in part to these journeys and the worries of his post that his illness must be attributed. It was long and painful, and

[1] Rosalie Chodkiewicz, married to Prince Alexander Lubomirski, the castellan of Kiev, imprisoned on account of suspected relations with Marie Antoinette and the émigrés, and guillotined in 1793. His only daughter married Wenceslas Rzewuski, celebrated for his travels in the East. She left *Mémoires*, which are still unpublished, and are in the possession of the Duke de Sermoneta, in Rome.

he only had short intervals of relief and improvement. He was very distressed at being separated from the Emperor and, with the Emperor's favour, he saw a number of his fair-weather friends desert him. But reconciled to us, he found that he still had some left.

Nothing is sweeter to the heart than to forget the evil that has been done to us, and one must do Count Tolstoy the justice of saying that he was sincerely attached to the Emperor, but there was no measure in the adoration that he felt for him, and he dishonoured himself by his cringing servility, which was a wrong to his master and himself.

The Emperor's return brought about no improvement in his condition, for he was already too ill to recover. His Majesty came to see him and did everything he could think of to console him. The whole faculty were summoned, but they only aggravated his danger and his sufferings.

I spent the summer again at my country-house on the Peterhof road, and went regularly once a week to Count Tolstoy's seat at Kamiennyï-Ostrov. I set out early, with my children, and we all stopped on the way at Mme. Rzewuska's, she afterwards coming on with us. I always avoided meeting Their Majesties, who came almost every day to Count Tolstoy's, for I should have thought it unbecoming to thrust myself upon the Empress.

Catiche was staying with her brother, and in August had the misfortune to lose her daughter, who was a charming child. This painful circumstance obliged me to stay longer with her, and we were on the balcony, during the evening, Mme. Rzewuska, Princess Bariatinski, the Count's sister-in-law, my daughter and I, when the Empress was announced. We remained where we were, and Her Majesty went straight to the Count's room, where she saw Catiche.

When she had paid her visit, she had me sent for into the drawing-room, which opened on the balcony. Catiche's trouble had greatly afflicted her and she said a great deal to me about it. Who better than she could feel for a mother's grief? Then she told me that she had seen me through the window when she came, but that she had not wished to

show herself on the balcony with red and swollen eyes. After taking both my hands, she spoke to me of the evenings that we had spent together in this house, of the cruel loss that I had since sustained, and of how sorry she was that she had done nothing for me.

This gleam of reunion with the Empress did me more harm than good, for my vague and uncertain position with regard to her was in too painful a contrast with the love I bore her. After this, I lost sight of her for some time.

Mme. Rzewuska came several times to spend a few days with me, and her presence, and the charm of her society, did me a great deal of good. She went with me several times to the Court at Pavlovsk, where the Empress Dowager invariably received me kindly.

At the masked ball at Peterhof, the Emperor did me the honour of dancing a *polonaise* with me. He spoke a great deal about my husband, who was then away, and he seemed to wish either for his return, or else that he might meet him at Moscow, where His Majesty was just going. I ought to add here that, when my husband took leave of the Emperor, he had a conversation with His Majesty, who made my husband give him his word of honour that he would consent to what he was going to ask him, and then insisted on my husband's promising to take up some active post on his return.

' I swear to you,' he said, ' that my feelings for you have never changed ; I say it before God and man, the confidence that I feel in you is equal to the esteem that you so well deserve. Believe me, I shall watch over your interests.' And, as a matter of fact, some months later, when my husband returned, he spoke to him with marked kindness and made him a Member of the Council, thus giving him an opportunity of making himself really of use. The Emperor had been travelling in Russia and in Poland, and had returned at the beginning of October.

As Count Tolstoy's sufferings increased, the doctors decided that he must go abroad, and he left, with his daughter, in August. They had a trying journey, and one which,

having been undertaken too late, proved useless. They called at our house on their way and breakfasted with us, and I said goodbye to him as if he were dying, which, indeed, he looked as if he were. He expired in Dresden in the month of December.

4

Nothing of any striking interest to me happened that winter. Towards January (1817) I took the liberty of reminding the Empress of the pension that she granted to Mme. de Beaumont. I had asked Countess Stroganov, who has the honour of belonging to Her Majesty's private circle, to undertake the commission, but after a few weeks, not having received any answer, I decided to speak myself, and did so at a ball. A few days later I received the money, and she wrote me a few very kind words.

The Duchess of Würtemberg had gone to Witebsk eighteen months before. I had the honour of corresponding with her, and I offered up many prayers for her return, as much on the Empress's account as on my own. She arrived for the New Year, and it was a sincere delight to me to see her again : her kindness to me has been such that I can never cease to love her. I had the honour of seeing her several times in her own house, and, through her, I was enabled to see something of the Empress.

I had ventured to ask the Empress to lend me a bronze Christ that she had graciously accepted from me a few years before, and she granted my request and sent me what I asked for, together with a note that she had been kind enough to write to me. I had a copy made of the Christ and sent it back to Her Majesty. A few days later, the Duchess of Würtemberg sent for me and in a quarter of an hour, to my great delight, I saw the Empress come. She told me that, having heard I was at the Duchess's, she had wished to hand me herself a letter from Countess Tolstoy.

We sat down. I had brought the Duchess a few thoughts

and Recollections that I had written down. The Empress expressed a wish to read them and the subject brought up a conversation about the past. She deigned to tell me that she still kept a little note I had written her, in which I had told her to be indulgent to others and severe to herself ; she added that she had often tried to put my advice into practice.

After an interview of an hour, the Empress took leave of me, pressing my hand, and I kissed hers with all my heart. I met her a second time. Her Majesty was distressed at the death of a young woman whom we both knew, and our conversation was sore and gloomy ; I found in it some reminders of the past, the past which calls so imperiously when the object that embellished it most is again before one's eyes ! When memory is evoked by inanimate objects, it seeks the one who has made them dear, suffers from their absence, and distracts us from all that is around us. But, when it finds that object, the magic power of affection makes us feel everything afresh, even to the very air we have breathed.

I went one morning to see the Duchess. The next minute the door of the drawing-room was opened softly and the Empress appeared. She said to me, as she came in :

' My heart divined that I should find you here, and I hastened to come.'

She sat down, asked me how I was, and spoke of my being obliged to go away to take the waters. We joked about a new school of doctors, who pretend that the heart is on the right, and afterwards we talked about the ' Recollections ' which I am writing, and the conversation changed its tone. The Empress was kind enough to say that she was glad she had persuaded me to undertake the task. We spoke of what they contained, and after a short pause for reflection, she added kindly :

' Oh ! dear, when shall I be able to see you again freely ! '

At this, I was silent : a respectful silence was the only answer I could make.

After making some arrangements about our papers,

Her Majesty went away, sooner than she seemed to wish, but she had to dress for a grand dinner. The Duchess told me what a pleasure it was to her to see the interest that the Empress took in me. I had taken the liberty of asking the Empress for a book of drawings that I had done for her four years before. She was kind enough to send it to me and wrote me a most gracious note, to which I had the honour of replying when I returned the book, in which I had put something fresh. On Easter Day, the Empress presented my youngest daughter with the monogram.

I have quoted a variety of trifling incidents, which cannot interest everybody; but it must be remembered that I have written 'Recollections' and not 'Memoirs,' and that those which relate to the Empress are very precious to me.

We never retraverse without emotion the paths that we trod in the springtime of our youth, and the heart, too, has favourite paths along which it loves to travel. Lawful and pure affections illumine them, and their limit is the grave.

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